

THE OLIVE TREE

Edition 15. September - October 2019

**How Travel & Tourism
can help meet the UN
Sustainable
Development Goals**



How Ageing Populations will Impact on Economies and Societies

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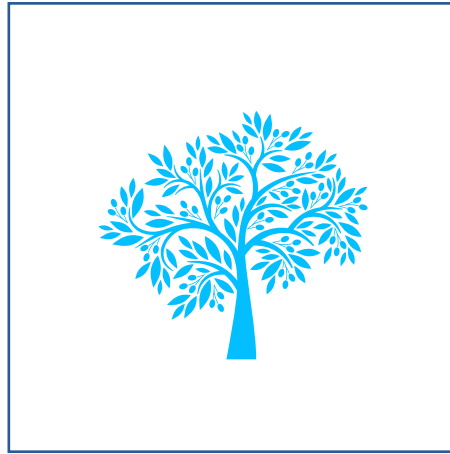
ศาสตร์ของพระราชากับการพัฒนาที่ยั่งยืน His Majesty's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy for SDGs

หลักปรัชญาของเศรษฐกิจพอเพียงเป็นหลักในการคิด ตัดสินใจ และการปฏิบัติ สำหรับการดำเนินชีวิตหรือประกอบกิจการงานใด ๆ ด้วยการใช้ **ความรู้** และ **คุณธรรม** เป็นฐาน ผ่านการไตร่ตรองด้วยหลักสำคัญ ๓ ประการ ได้แก่ พอประมาณ ไม่มากเกินไป ไม่น้อยเกินไป มีเหตุผล ตามหลักวิชาการ มีภูมิคุ้มกัน หรือรองรับการเปลี่ยนแปลงหรือวิกฤตที่อาจเกิดขึ้น ซึ่งจะนำไปสู่การพัฒนาอย่างสมดุลในทุกมิติ ไม่ว่าจะเป็นด้านเศรษฐกิจ สังคม สิ่งแวดล้อม และวัฒนธรรม อันเป็นแนวทางที่จะนำไปสู่ **ความสุขที่ยั่งยืน** ได้อย่างแท้จริง

"Sufficiency Economy Philosophy" is a mindset for decision-making. We base our decisions on our **Knowledge** using our internal value - our **virtues** - through applying the three principles of **moderation, reasonableness** and **prudence**. We aim for the outcomes of our decision to be balanced among the four dimensions of human life: **economy, society, environment** and **culture**, in order to promote sustainable happiness for all.



The Sufficiency Economy Philosophy of Thailand's late monarch, His Majesty King Bhumibhol Adulyadej, designed in the aftermath of the 1997 Asian economic crisis, offers one of the best models of Alternative Development globally. It is now going mainstream, primarily because it has much in common with the UN SDGs. Thailand, where the 1997 Asian economic crisis started, is certainly according it more respect than ever before. The rest of the world needs to follow if true "Sustainability" is to be realised.



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Imtiaz Muqbil



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Message from

GOVERNOR, TOURISM AUTHORITY OF THAILAND

YUTHASAK SUPASORN

This month, September 2019, a global leaders' summit will be held at the United Nations in New York, USA to assess the past, present and future of the global UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is of great concern to hear the UN report that in spite of the widespread and extensive efforts by countries, cities and communities worldwide, insufficient progress is being made on meeting many of the SDGs. Hence, there is a need to initiate the SDGs for the benefit of the world.

I am proud to report that the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has recognised and respected the UN's call. We are already moving at a brisk pace to fulfill our commitment to making travel and tourism the kingdom's most economically promising, environmentally sustainable, and culturally vibrant sector in the years to come. The targets for 2020 are to boost total tourism revenues by 10% over the projection for 2019. We have also set clear directions to move the Thai tourism industry towards responsible tourism.

All around the country, we are conducting campaigns to reduce plastic usage and food wastage, promote alternative energies and organic agricultural produce, conserve water, plant trees, and much more. Just in the month of August 2019 alone, we announced that Thailand will add five new national parks nationwide to mark the start of the reign of His Majesty King Rama X. This is also in accordance with Thailand's 20-Year National Strategic Plan, which targets increasing the forest area to 55% of the entire country by 2037. TAT has also begun using the online tourism management system 'Local Kit', as part of our ongoing efforts to enhance the quality of and add value to community-based tourism in Thailand.

We will also be launching what we believe is the first training course and manual to enhance awareness of the UN SDGs amongst travel industry communicators.

In line with the Year of Thailand's ASEAN Chairmanship under the theme of "Advancing Partnership through Sustainability", TAT is proud to be doing more than its fair share to advance the UN SDG agenda. We are also committed to doing much more in the years to come.



YUTHASAK SUPASORN
Governor
Tourism Authority of Thailand



Message from **EXECUTIVE EDITOR**

IMTIAZ MUQBIL

September 2019 is set to be a defining month in global history. World leaders will convene at the UN for the annual General Assembly as well as the first stock-taking summit of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Both could be turning points for what I have termed “The Two Global Warmings.”

At the UN General Assembly, leaders will take turns to justify their policies and actions, in the midst of growing global conflict and violence and rising concerns about the future of democracy and personal privacy. Then, at the Climate Change Summit, they will again take to the podium to brag about what they are doing to advance the UN SDGs.

In fact, the actions of global leaders are becoming oxymorons. On the one hand, they want to boost national economies and alleviate poverty; on the other, they are wasting billions of dollars on armaments and security equipment. All this, while seeking additional funds for climate finance, education, health, agriculture, innovation, and more.

Do Travel & Tourism leaders recognise these contradictions?

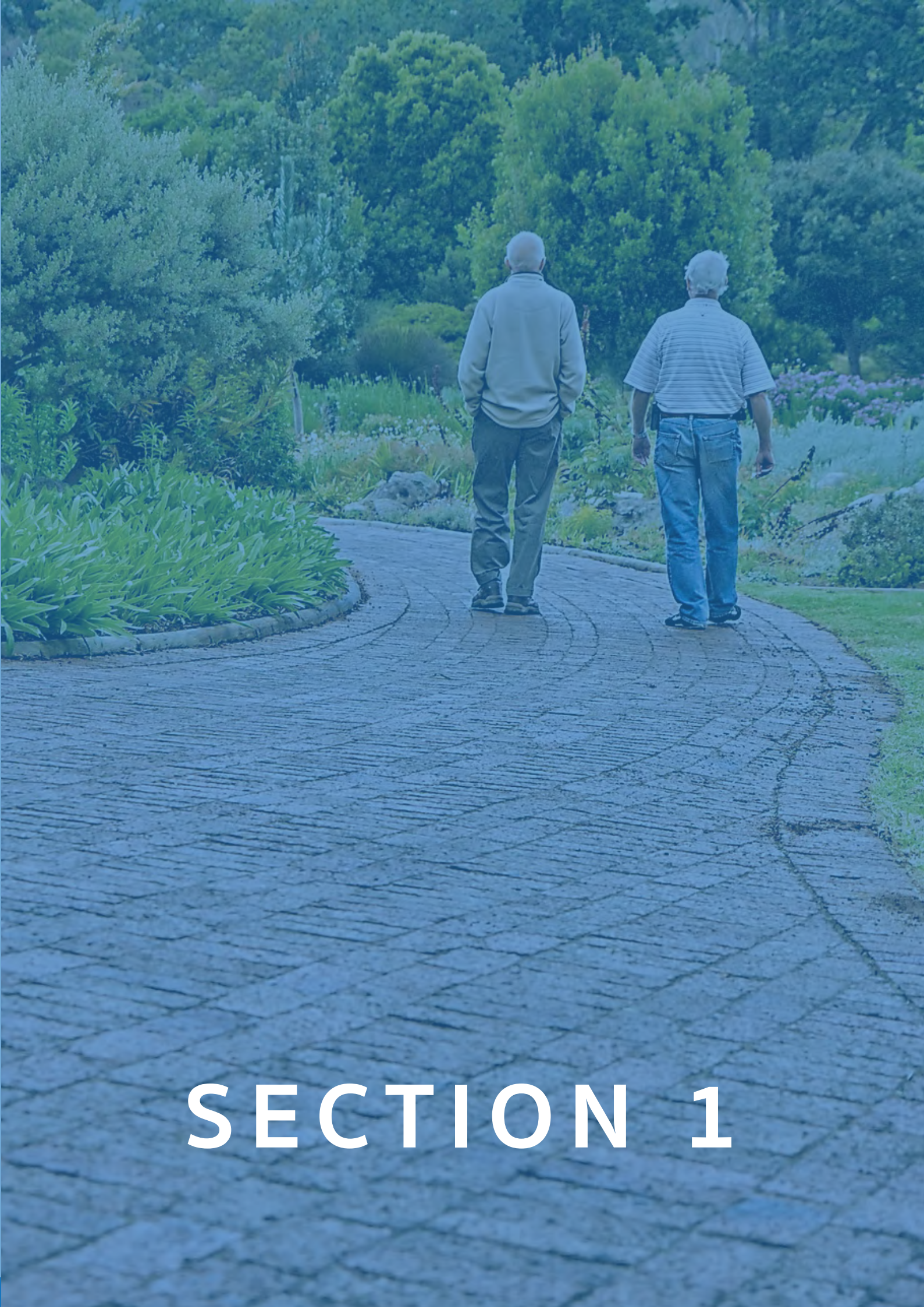
The UNWTO’s biennial General Assembly to be held in St Petersburg between 9 - 13 September 2019 should offer some leadership and policy guidance on how Travel & Tourism, the so-called “Industry of Peace”, can walk the talk and actually become a part of the solution in what the UN terms “The Decade of Delivery” -- the final 2020-2030 period of the UN SDGs.

If such leadership and policy guidance is indeed forthcoming, it can be echoed from industry pulpits on World Tourism Day, which also falls this month, on 27 September.

Indeed, this year’s WTD commemoration will bring all these contradictions to a head. The host city is New Delhi, capital of a country where one of the world’s most desirable destinations, Kashmir, is under siege. The theme of this year’s WTD is “Tourism and Jobs: a Better Future for All”. In Kashmir, tourism jobs are dead.

At the PATA annual summit in PyeongChang, Korea in May 2018, keynote speaker former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon made a forceful comment. He said his biggest disappointment was that global leaders “talk big” at the UN pulpits and then go back home to act exactly the opposite. This editor was the only travel trade journalist to pick up on his comment, here: <https://www.travel-impact-newswire.com/2018/05/pata-annual-summit-ex-un-chief-says-leaders-talk-big-at-un-but-dont-walk-the-talk-once-back-home/>.

If Travel & Tourism industry leaders feel Mr Ban’s words are spot-on, their primary role in The Decade of Delivery of the SDGs should be to hold political leaders accountable for not walking the talk. If they agree on just that fundamental premise, what happens next could very well be history.



SECTION 1

LEAD STORY 1:

How Ageing Populations will Impact on Economies and Societies



UN Photo: John Isaacs

Bangkok, (UNESCAP) -- Population ageing will be one of the most important forces shaping the outcome of social and economic policy in the coming decades in the Asian and Pacific region, yet it is not always explicitly included in policy discussions.

According to the United Nations, this is because its influence is difficult to discern in the short-run, a myopic policy focus inevitably results in delays in addressing it, along with other slow but steadily mounting challenges such as climate change, non-communicable disease and environmental degradation

Between 24-27 June 2019, the Asia-Pacific Workshop on Measuring Population Ageing and Assessing its Economic and Fiscal Consequences, was held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, organised by the UN Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social

Affairs (DESA) and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

Says a UN report, “Achievement of an inclusive economic development that leaves no one behind requires good investment and good planning. Because achieving the SDGs by 2030 also means insuring their sustainability beyond 2030, training in the use of long-run population, economic, and fiscal forecasts is an important component of capacity development as envisioned by Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.”

Workshop participants learnt how to use medium- and long-run economic and fiscal forecasts to deal with the aforementioned issues, and address the cost, equity, and sustainability of development policies and programmes.

The ability of policymakers and analysts in national statistical offices, ministries in the planning, economic and social sectors, and research institutions of many developing countries to undertake policy analysis in the area of population ageing and development has essentially been hampered by a lack of:

- Data on economic activity disaggregated by age (earnings, consumption, receipt of social benefits, payment of taxes, etc)
- Methodological frameworks to assess the socioeconomic implications of changing age structures on economic well-being, economic growth, and the sustainability of support mechanisms

The first obstacle has been addressed by the methodological framework of National Transfer Accounts (NTA). NTAs disaggregate national economic activities, such as consumption and earnings by age, and are based on the same principles, standards and definitions of the System of National Accounts.¹

The second obstacle can be addressed by using medium- and long-run economic and fiscal forecast models based on population projections, age-disaggregated data from NTAs, and empirically-based observations of relationships between economic development and the roles played by individuals, families, communities and the state in providing support for children and older persons. This workshop focused on addressing this second obstacle.

In a project funded by Canada's development programme (IDRC) and the University of California at Berkeley, the Population Division of ECLAC developed such a model. The model has been used by ECLAC, and subsequently the World Bank, for long-run fiscal forecasts for low- and middle-income countries.

The Workshop objective was to introduce (a) new measures of population ageing that reflect the emerging demographic landscape of the Asian and Pacific region, and (b) innovative methods for assessing the medium- and long-run economic and fiscal impacts of population ageing.

The Workshop was intended for government officials and national professionals (demographers, statisticians, economists and others) involved in envisioning national futures via population, economic, fiscal or budgetary forecasts. Participants were informed on the use of population projections for economic and fiscal planning and thereby ensure long-term sustainable development.

The Workshop consisted of interactive lectures and hands-on training for participants to apply the methods learnt and present their results for discussion.

Sessions covered the following topics:

- Traditional measurement of population ageing, such as the demographic dependency ratio
- New measures, such as prospective age, thanatological age, and the economic dependency ratio
- The use of population projections to forecast economic, fiscal, and familial impact of population ageing
- Policy responses to population ageing

The following charts derived from the various presentations at the workshop indicate some of the future trends, issues and challenges related to ageing societies in the Asia-Pacific.

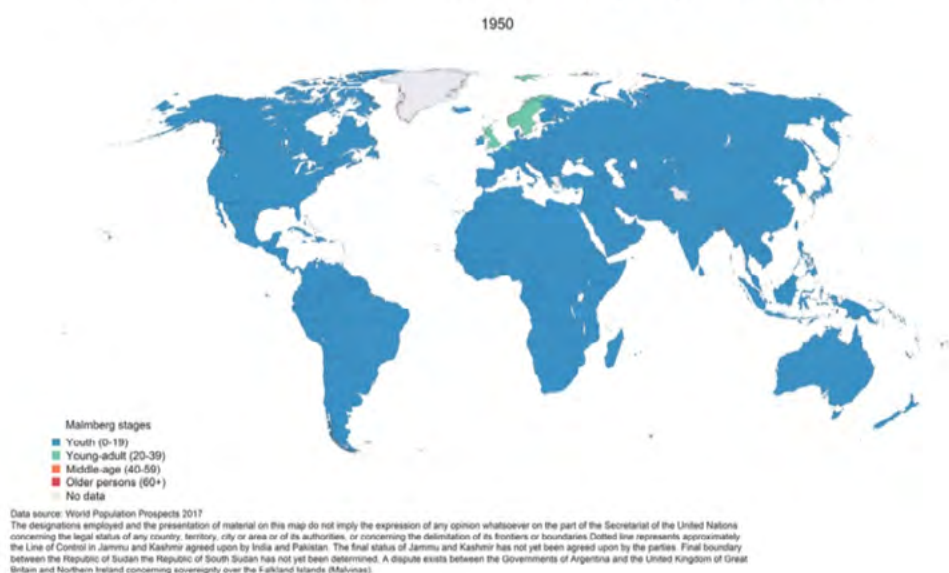
Population growth rate, %, selected Asia-Pacific countries, by ESCAP subregion

Country	2000	2018	2030	2050
China	0.6	0.4	0.0	-0.5
Japan	0.2	-0.2	-0.5	-0.6
Republic of Korea	0.7	0.3	0.1	-0.5
Lao PDR	1.6	1.5	1.0	0.3
Malaysia	2.3	1.3	0.9	0.4
Thailand	1.0	0.2	-0.1	-0.6
Timor-Leste	1.7	2.1	2.0	1.5
Afghanistan	3.9	2.3	1.8	1.0
India	1.8	1.1	0.7	0.2
Nepal	1.8	1.1	0.7	0.2
Russian Federation	-0.4	0.0	-0.3	-0.2
Australia	1.1	1.3	0.9	0.7
Fiji	0.5	0.7	0.4	-0.1
Papua New Guinea	2.6	2.0	1.7	1.1
ESCAP	1.2	0.8	0.5	0.0

Source: World Population Prospects 2017

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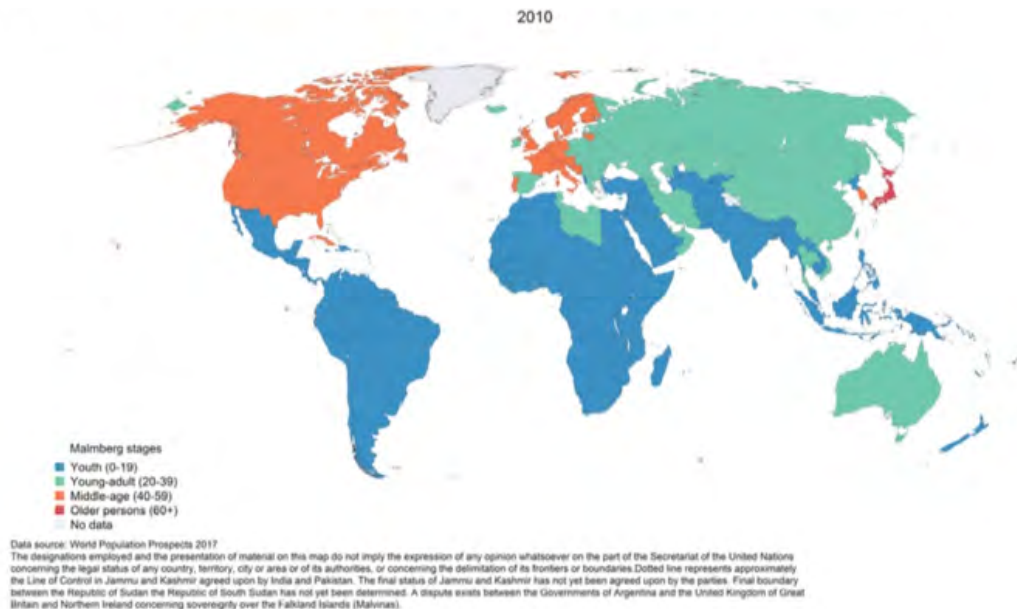
1950: Youth-dominant populations



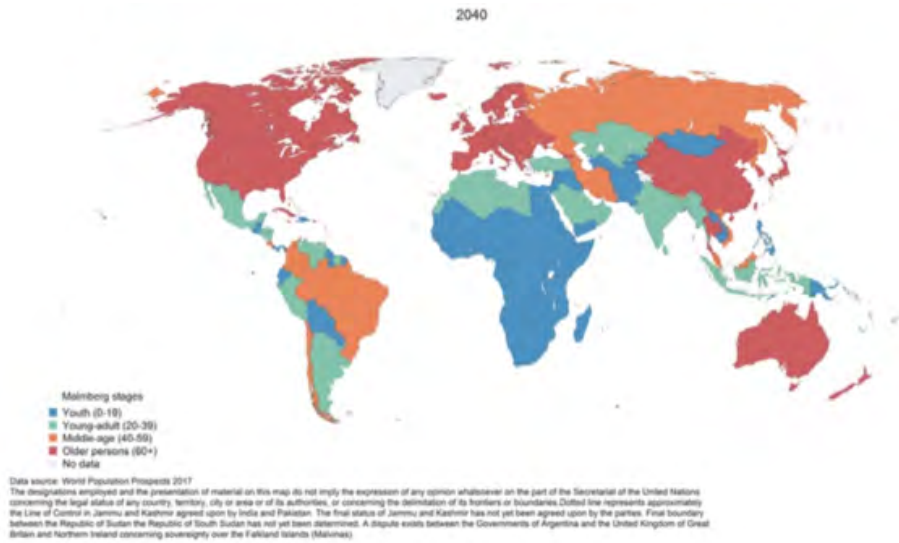
1980: Young-adult populations in the north



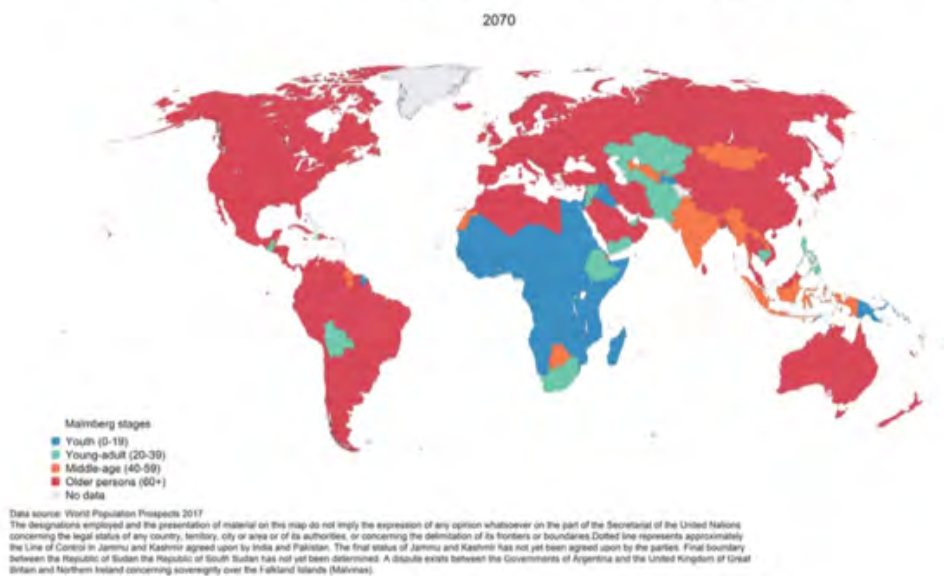
2010: Middle-age populations emerge



2040: Aged populations emerge



2070: Aged populations spread

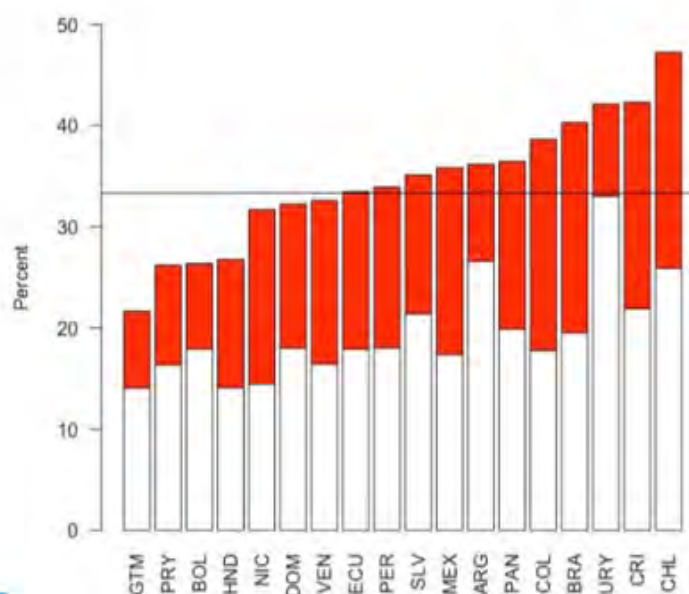


Restructuring of health care system to face challenges of chronic disease.

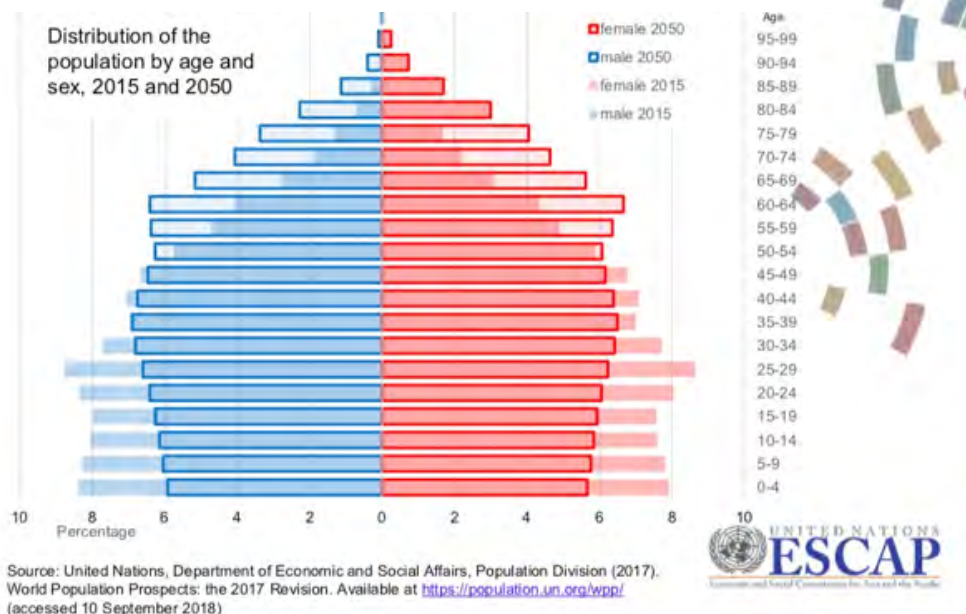
The proportion of public spending on health care directed toward the older persons:

2015: 18%
2045: 35%

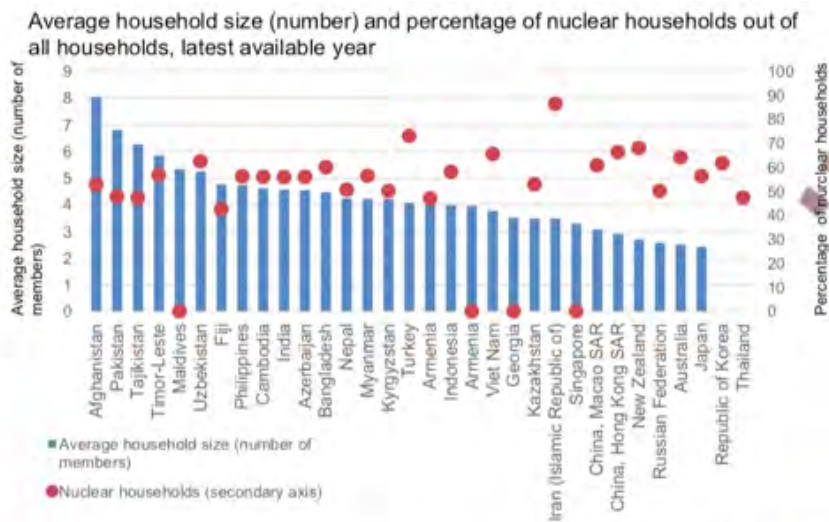
DESA Population



Populations are becoming “older” as a whole, more older women than older men



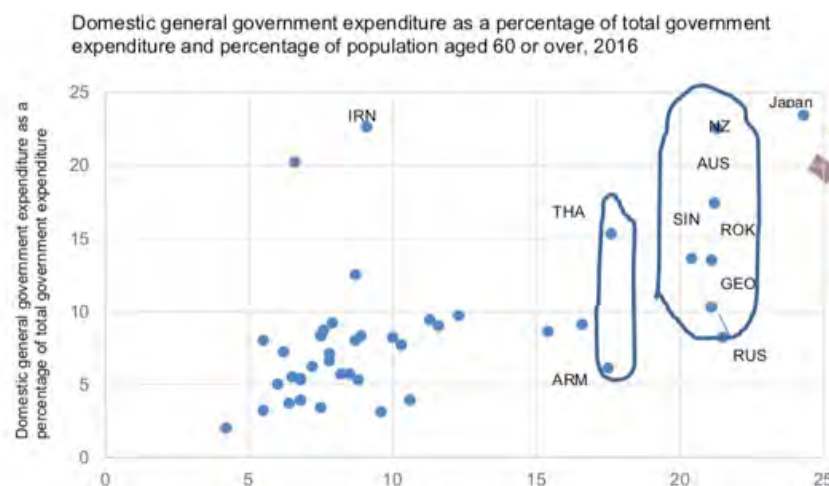
Households are becoming smaller



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018). Household Size and Composition 2018. (POP/DB/PD/HSCD/2018).



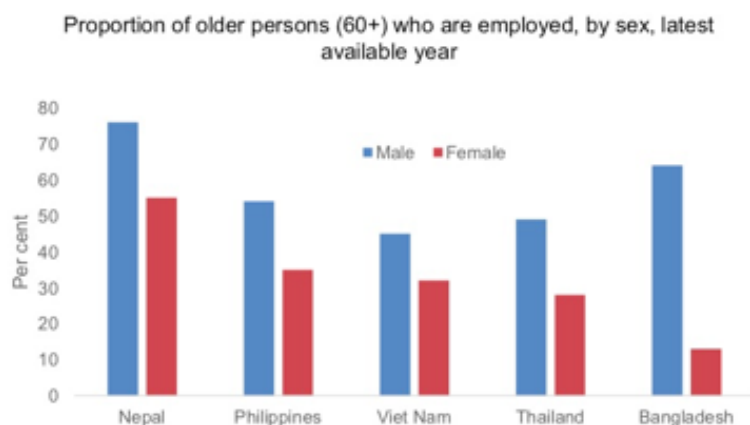
Governments of ageing countries seem to give higher priority to health spending



Source: WHO, Global Health Observatory Data Repository, online, accessed 10 June 2019, and United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017). World Population Prospects: the 2017 Revision



Many older persons still work - more men than women - what does it tell us?

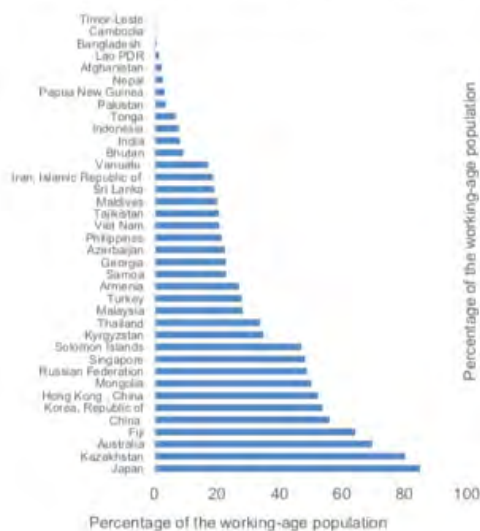


Source: HelpAge from LFS 2013 (Bangladesh), LFS 2008 (Nepal), LFS 2012 (Philippines), LFS 2013 (Thailand), LFS 2014 (Viet Nam)

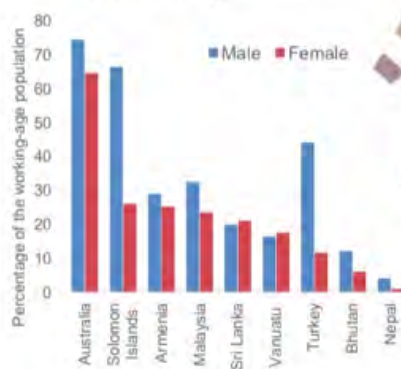


Coverage of pensions is low in most countries of the Asia-Pacific region

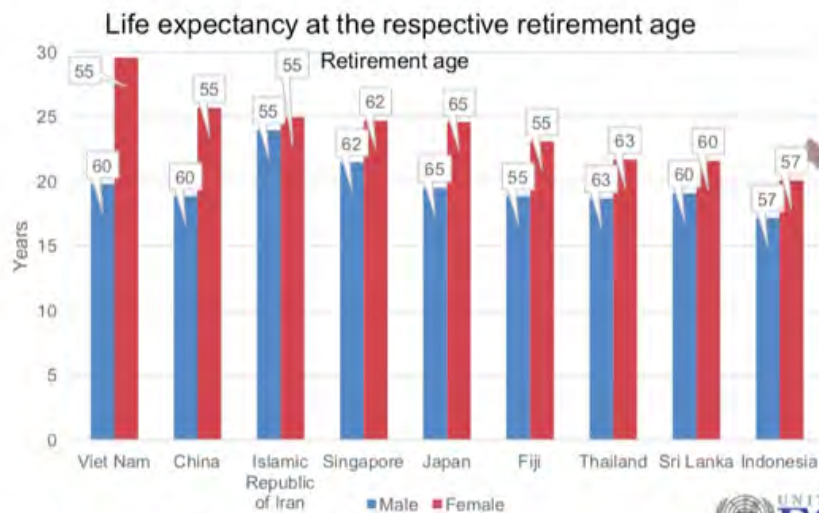
Effective coverage of pensions as a percentage of the working-age population, total, latest available year



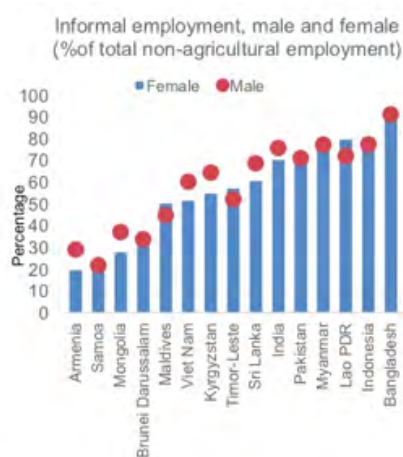
Effective coverage of pensions as a percentage of the working-age population, males and females, latest available year



Low retirement ages: people still live between 19 and 30 years after retirement



Social protection coverage for the informal sector is limited



Source: International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT database. Data retrieved in April 2019.

Pension systems tend to perpetuate existing inequalities

KEY CHALLENGES TO THE PENSION SYSTEMS



Work-based: only those who participated in the formal labour force are included



No redistribution: Most pension systems in the region are "defined contribution" – you get what you pay



Not gender responsive: Only few countries have "child credits" for women – women are structurally disadvantaged in contributory pension systems



Social pensions important but benefit levels often too low



UNITED NATIONS
ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Ageing societies will arguably have the most significant social, economic and business impact on Travel & Tourism in the years to come. Senior citizens are predominantly seen as sources of business, especially those in good health and plenty of free time and spare cash. Typically, all the social and financial consequences of managing ageing societies at the national level do not figure highly on the industry agenda. That mindset will change more rapidly than we think.

LEAD STORY 2:

Global leaders to evaluate progress, chart future of SDGs in final “Decade of Delivery”



United Nations -- The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) under the auspices of the General Assembly - the SDG Summit - will take place on 24 and 25 September at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. It will be the occasion for Heads of State and Government together with all relevant stakeholders to review progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Since their launch in 2015, considerable progress has been made on a number of SDGs and targets.

The Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at the HLPF, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, show that many Governments have prioritized the integration of the SDGs into their national plans and policies, including local government and cities. Institutional arrangements have been made to drive and monitor progress. Initial progress has been achieved and challenges identified.

There has also been significant response from stakeholders, including international organizations, businesses, civil society, academia, youth and others, who, through a wide range of actions and initiatives, have identified entry points to advance SDG implementation. The United Nations Development System has also

been undergoing the deepest reform in decades to better respond to the paradigm shift at the heart of the 2030 Agenda.

At the same time, progress has been slow on many SDGs, and the most vulnerable people and countries continue to suffer the most. The global response thus far has not been ambitious and transformative enough. There is need for a major effort to move faster towards the vision of the 2030 Agenda and accelerate our efforts.

The SDG Summit therefore aims to not only review progress but also to provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for accelerating progress towards the 2030 Agenda. It aims to mark the beginning of a decade of delivery and to provide space for all actors to identify SDG acceleration actions that will speed up the transformation of our societies and economics.

The Leaders Dialogues are intended to provide platforms for Heads of State and Government to share insights, give specific guidance and make recommendations on the six main themes that will be addressed during the Summit. The themes are inspired by the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), written by a team of Independent Scientists, and by the Secretary-General's Special Edition of the annual SDG Progress Report.

Leaders Dialogue 1: Megatrends Impacting the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals Report

2019



Important changes are taking place at a global scale that impact all our lives and set the stage on which actions to achieve the 2030 Agenda will play out. These trends include population and economic growth, environmental degradation, climate change and developments in science and technology. They are set in motion by human activity and can represent the aggregated impact of individual and collective decisions at various levels. They have ripple effects in a world that is increasingly interconnected through how its natural systems interact, and also through increasing flows of goods, capital, people, information and knowledge.

At a macro-level, these trends are indeed global - however, the ways in which they impact specific populations, communities or countries depend on the context. For example, demographic changes are taking place across the world, but certain regions are currently experiencing rapid growth in numbers of young people, while others face a relatively faster increase in older people.

Recent global assessments indicate an accelerating decline in the quality and integrity of natural systems across the world, with a million species faced with extinction, even as areas under protection in some parts of the world are

increasing. Critically, trends like biodiversity loss and climate change are reaching tipping points where negative impacts may become irreversible. Rapid advances in science and technology offer the promise of addressing many challenges, but also bring to the fore issues such as increasing inequality across and within countries.

Taken together, these (and other) megatrends indicate that a forward-looking approach to SDG implementation is needed, which anticipates these on-going changes while also taking into account the impact of implementation actions on them.



Leaders Dialogue 2: Accelerating the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals: Critical Entry Points

The true transformative potential of the 2030 Agenda lies in achieving the SDGs and targets through an integrated approach that builds on the interlinkages between the goals, maximizing the synergies while alleviating the trade-offs. An integrated approach requires finding entry points where the potential interlinkages are particularly strong, so that addressing them jointly and effectively would accelerate progress in implementation towards a broad sweep of the Agenda.

One such entry point identified in the GSDR is strengthening human well-being, which implies eradicating deprivations, closing opportunity gaps and expanding capabilities, including through access to quality education. Other entry points include: (i) shifting towards sustainable and just economies, (ii) building sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition patterns, (iii) achieving energy decarbonization with universal

access to energy, (iv) promoting sustainable urban and peri-urban development and (v) securing the earth's shared natural resources in the global environmental commons. Each of these areas encompasses multiple SDGs and targets and are entry points for cross-cutting progress across the 2030 Agenda within relatively short timelines.

But entry points for transformation are not exclusive of these examples. Other entry points may be best suited to specific regional, national or local contexts. The SDG Progress Report also identifies eight systemic and cross-cutting areas where urgent action is required and they are (i) leaving no one behind; (ii) mobilizing adequate and well-directed financing; (iii) strengthening effective and inclusive institutions for implementing integrated solutions; (iv) accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs locally; (v) building resilience; (vi) investing in data for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda; (vii) realizing the benefits of science, technology and innovation for all; and (viii) solving challenges through international cooperation

Leaders Dialogue 3: Leveraging Progress Across the Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda is unprecedented in its level of ambition and range of interconnection across goals and targets, and it will be achieved only when a diverse array of actors - local and national governments, the private sector, academia, civil society organizations, youth and others – work together. The GSDR identifies four “levers of transformation” available for use by these actors: governance, economy and finance, individual and collective action, and science and technology.

Several of these levers are enumerated in the Agenda itself as the ‘means of implementation’, but it is becoming increasingly apparent that they must be deployed in strategic, innovative and integrated ways if they are to reach their transformative potential. At the same time, it is also clear that SDG progress itself can end up improving the efficacy of these levers or how they work together - which is also critically important. Governments, civil society and the private sector can advance the SDGs through effective, transparent and participatory institutions, given sufficient means of implementation: adequate financing from a range of sources (including

Official Development Assistance); latest scientific evidence and technological solutions, among others.

Likewise, academic and government institutions can strengthen the role that science and technology play in policy making in part by supporting innovative approaches to sustainability science, emphasizing cross-disciplinary partnerships, and by committing support and resources to scientific institutions in the Global South.



Leaders Dialogue 4: Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals

The VNRs conducted at the HLPF have shown that the 2030 Agenda has generated extensive implementation efforts in many countries. Goals and targets have been mapped and/or adapted to national situations and included in new or revised development plans and strategies. The SDGs are also being pursued through multisectoral policies, though ensuring policy coherence across sectors and levels of government remains an important challenge. For example, few countries appear to have costed the SDGs, making it difficult to develop an integrated financing framework.

Many countries have mobilized their institutions around the SDGs, or created new institutional arrangements to promote, coordinate and review the implementation of the SDGs. Some have even involved their parliaments or other oversight institutions in their effort to implement the SDGs, and in many cases those institutions have taken their own initiative and conducted dedicated hearings and discussions. Additionally, they have a critical role to play in helping to keep the momentum on SDGs implementation within the business sector and civil society. Local and regional governments have also undertaken actions to raise awareness about the 2030 Agenda and are often well placed to lead implementation.

Many mayors, governors and local public officers have already committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. They can play an important role in generating growth and employment through local economic development or fiscal strategies; promoting the inclusion of women and youth; raising awareness of the importance of sustainable consumption and production; and coordinating partnerships with all relevant stakeholders.

Leadership Dialogue 5: Partnerships for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda has called for a revitalized Global Partnership, working in a spirit of global solidarity, in particular with the poorest and the most vulnerable. Since the Agenda's adoption in 2015, Governments around the world have been working to mobilize the means required to implement it, supported by the concrete policies and actions outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and in the 2030 Agenda.

However, because of its unprecedented scope and breadth, this ambitious 2030 Agenda, and the 17 SDGs at its core, cannot be achieved by Governments alone. It is therefore encouraging that an increasing number of multi-stakeholder partnerships have been taking shape among Governments, the private sector, civil society, UN

system and other relevant stakeholders, to fulfill this collective responsibility.

Leaders Dialogue 6: 2020-2030 Vision

Evidence from both the GSDR and the SDG Progress Report indicates that we are not on track for realizing many goals and targets by 2030, including the eradication of extreme poverty. The ten years remaining until 2030 should therefore be considered the 'Decade of Delivery' devoted to realizing the promise of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The 'decade of delivery' will demonstrate that a new, more inclusive multilateralism can work to address global challenges and risks, including rising hunger due to conflicts, economic fragility, inequalities, and environmental degradation.

In a fast-changing world, the focus must be on the ambitious and global solutions that are already known to work while continuing the search for innovative ones to transform our economies and societies on a healthy planet. Science and technology hold great promise for realizing the SDGs and can be transformed into a powerful force for good.

The international community should also address the 21 targets that mature in 2020, most of which are unlikely to be met. Of those, twelve relate to



various aspects of biodiversity and are critical to how we continue to engage with nature and how we manage natural resources.

With up to one million species currently facing the threat of extinction, an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework would be necessary to urgently address this global crisis. In addition, there are other 2020 targets on road traffic accidents, opportunities for higher education in LDCs, SIDS and African countries,

youth employment, universal internet access, disaster resilience, climate change financing (\$100 billion annually); increasing the exports of developing countries, including doubling LDCs' share of global exports; and enhancing the capacity of developing countries, including for LDCs and SIDS, to have high-quality, timely and reliable data. Moreover, 2025 targets relate to global water use, energy use from renewable sources and emissions.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

The outcomes of this summit will essentially shape the sustainability agenda of the Travel & Tourism industry too. All the evaluations will be done, the future priorities and strategies identified. Travel & Tourism entities will only have to draft their own individual plans to line with them.

LEAD STORY 3:

Relentless sequence of disasters in Asia-Pacific 'sign of things to come'



United Nations, (UN News Centre) 22 August 2019 - Changing patterns and worsening impacts of natural disasters in Asia and the Pacific, coupled with environmental degradation and climate change, are not only making efforts to predict such catastrophes more difficult, but are also a “sign of things to come”, the United Nations development arm in the region has warned.

Issued by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific ([ESCAP](#)), the [Asia-Pacific Disaster Report](#) 2019 revealed that the annual economic losses due to disasters cost the region nearly \$675 billion, about 2.4 per cent its gross domestic product.

In addition to the impact of disasters on human lives, the economic losses also threaten to reverse hard-won development across the Asia-Pacific region.

[According](#) to Ms Armida Alisjahbana, the head of [ESCAP](#), the region’s countries cannot achieve the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) by 2030, if their people are not protected from disasters.

“This means not just building resilience in the priority zones but doing so across the entire region – reaching the most marginal and vulnerable communities,” said Ms. Alisjahbana.

Investments in disaster risk reduction and resilience building will be “far smaller than the damage and losses” from unmitigated, she added.

“Moreover, these same investments will deliver co-benefits — in the form of better education, health, social and infrastructure services, and higher agricultural production and incomes,” she added.

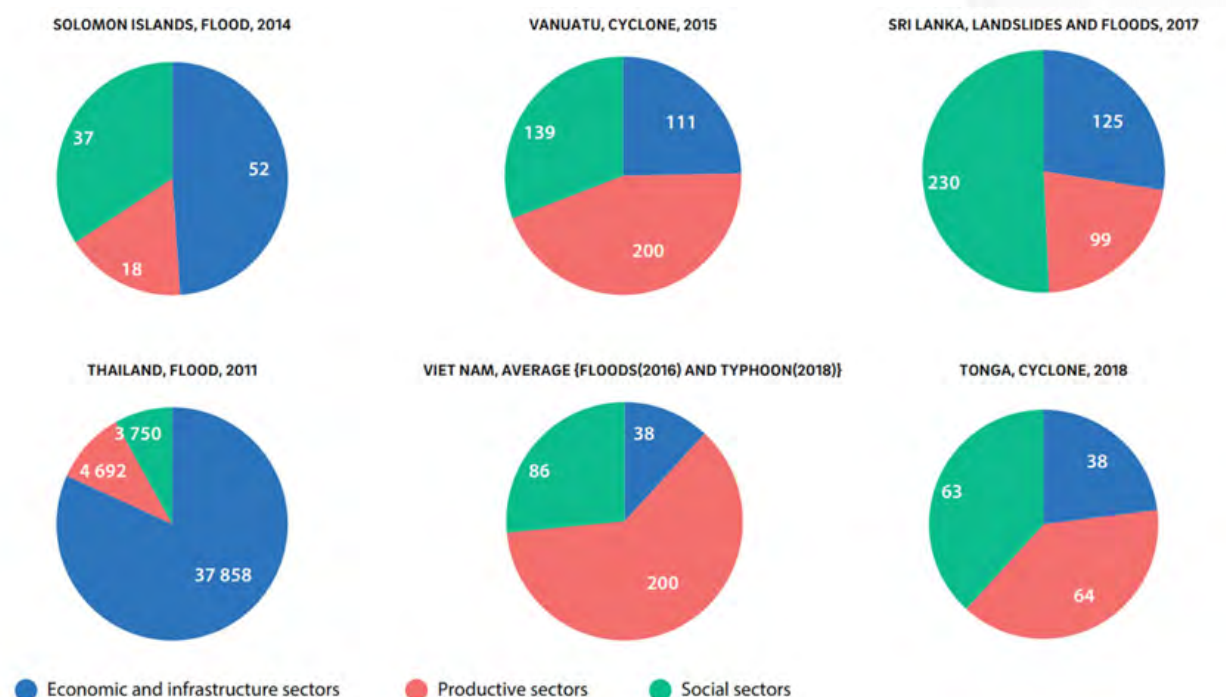
Four distinct ‘hotspots’

In the report, ESCAP identified four distinct “hotspots” across the region, where fragile environments are converging with critical socioeconomic vulnerabilities with disastrous consequences.

The first is located within the transboundary river basins of South and South-East Asia – home to hundreds of millions – where poverty, hunger and under-nourishment are coupled with intensifying floods that alternate with prolonged droughts.

Other hotspots include the Pacific Ring of Fire; Pacific small island developing States; and sand and dust storm corridors where environmental fragility combined with land degradation, desertification and climate change could lead to devastating storms.

Sectoral impact of disasters on selected countries.



Sources: Country PDNA, Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery.

Need for 'transformative change'

The report, released ahead of ESCAP's Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction that will meet from 28 to 30 August, calls for transformative change, underscoring that social policies and disaster resilience must no longer be treated as separate policy domains.

Instead, government agencies and ministries should collaborate and align their plans to ensure that disaster risk reduction and building resilience can be achieved comprehensively across policy sectors.

ESCAP is the UN's socio-economic development wing in the Asia-Pacific region. Its 53 member States and 9 associate members span a geographic area from the Pacific island of Tuvalu in the east to Turkey in the west, and Russia in the north to New Zealand in the south. The region is home to nearly two-thirds of the world's population.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Every natural disaster impacts on Travel & Tourism, causing cancellations, disruptions and serious losses. The topic needs far more study than it currently gets, especially in terms of cause and solutions to facilitate rescue and recovery.

LEAD STORY 4:

‘Invisible’ crisis of water quality threatens human and environmental well-being



*Water, along with pollutants and contaminating agents, flows into a canal in Maputo, Mozambique. (File)
Photo: John Hogg / World Bank*

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 20 August 2019 -- Deteriorating water quality worldwide is slashing the economic potential of heavily polluted areas, according to a new World Bank report, released on Tuesday. It also warns that the “invisible crisis of water quality” is threatening human and environmental well-being.

In some regions, rivers and lakes are so polluted that they are literally catching fire. Prime examples include the Bellandur Lake in Bangalore, India, which has carried ash onto buildings up to six miles away.

Many other bodies of water, however, are polluting less dramatically, but just as dangerously, with a toxic cocktail of bacteria, sewage, chemicals and plastics, sucking oxygen out of water supplies, and in effect, poisoning them.

The World Bank’s study, [*Quality Unknown: The Invisible Water Crisis*](#), sheds new light on the ways that this process is taking place, using the world’s largest global database on water quality, gathered from monitoring stations, remote sensor

technology and machine learning tools.

The report argues that without urgent action, water quality will continue to deteriorate, impacting human health, massively reducing food production and, consequently, stalling economic progress.

Starved of oxygen

The report’s estimation of a one-third cut in the economic potential of affected regions, due to low water quality, is based on Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), which is a measure of how much oxygen is needed to remove waste organic matter through decomposition, by bacteria that live in environments containing oxygen.

Once the BOD reaches a certain threshold, economic growth in areas downstream of the polluted water drops by up to one-third, because of the negative impacts on health, agriculture and ecosystems.



The nitrogen problem

The use of nitrogen as a fertilizer in agriculture is singled out as particularly problematic when it comes to maintaining water quality. Nitrogen enters rivers, lakes and oceans where it transforms into substances known as nitrates.

Nitrates are harmful to young children, affecting

their growth and brain development. The study states that for every additional kilogram of nitrogen fertilizer per hectare that enters the water supply as nitrates, the level of childhood stunting can increase by as much as 19 percent, compared to those who are not exposed.

This also has an impact on the future earning potential of affected children, reducing their earnings as adults, by as much as 2 percent.

Increased salinity in water, a consequence of more intense droughts, storm surges and rising water extraction, also comes under scrutiny, as a factor that is making land less agriculturally productive.

The report estimates that the world is losing enough food to feed 170 million people each year – the equivalent of the population of Bangladesh – due to increase salinity, or salt content.

In order to meet these challenges, the World Bank is calling for immediate attention to be paid to these dangers, which face both developed and developing countries, at a global, national, and local level.

The report recommends a set of actions that countries can take to improve water quality, including improving environmental policies and standards; accurate monitoring of pollution levels; effective enforcement systems; water treatment infrastructure supported with incentives for private investment; and reliable, accurate information disclosure to households to inspire greater civic engagement.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Water, water everywhere.... Travel & Tourism is excessively focussed on eliminating plastic. What about the sewage and waste water it generates? How much of that is treated and recycled? If it's a question of priorities, why is plastic getting so much more attention than water quality?

LEAD STORY 5:

Asia-Pacific Climate Week Gears Up to Boost Climate Ambition



UN Climate Change News (UN ESCAP) — Seizing the opportunity of the incredible momentum of climate action, and Asia-Pacific countries being at the forefront of innovation to tackle the climate crisis, the upcoming Asia-Pacific Climate Week 2019 (APCW) is gearing up to boost the region's response to the current climate emergency. It will take place at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand, from 2 to 6 September 2019

The Week is being organized by the United Nations Climate Change in partnership with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and other international and regional organizations, which include the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme DTU Partnership, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank Group, the Asian Development Bank, the International Emissions Trading Association, the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies and the Climate Technology Centre and Network.

The APCW provides a space to develop multi-stakeholder climate action in the spirit of the Talanoa Dialogue, in reference to the traditional Pacific islands notion of an inclusive, participatory and transparent dialogue.

The world is at a critical juncture in its efforts to tackle the climate emergency. As [underlined](#) by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, leadership at the highest level is urgently needed to close the ambition gap between current national climate plans (known as Nationally Determined Contributions or NDCs) and what is needed for the international community to meet the central [Paris Climate Change Agreement](#) goal of limiting global average temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius and achieving climate neutrality by 2050.

The results of the APCW will feed into the outcome of the [Climate Action Summit](#) organized by the Secretary-General on 23 September in New York, thereby boosting ambition and accelerating the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Discussions in Bangkok will focus on five of the nine Summit's tracks: energy transition; industry transition; infrastructure; cities and local action; resilience and adaptation; and nature-based solutions.

The results of the APCW will also be a key contribution to the [UN Climate Change Conference](#) (COP25) to be held in Santiago, Chile, from 2 to 13 December.

The APCW's agenda, [now available online](#), features a spectrum of leaders from the public and private sectors, from local to national governments, from investors to business leaders, and from representatives of the youth and the civil society to UN officials.

Ministers of Thailand and from countries in the region, local authorities, regional leaders from public and private sectors, youth and civil society and senior UN officials will gather on Wednesday, 4 September for the opening of the High-Level Segment.

Opportunities to showcase action in the Asia-Pacific region

In parallel to the agenda of events, climate actors from around the region are invited to showcase groundbreaking climate solutions through the following ways of engagement:

Side Events provide opportunities for organizations to conduct a session on topics aligned with the agenda of the 2019 APCW.

An Action Hub provides a platform to showcase innovative climate action and ideas on a stage in the centre of the exhibition space (each slot lasts 15-30 minutes).

Exhibition Booths provide opportunities for organizations to showcase their work throughout the APCW.

A Knowledge Corner provides NGOs, youth organizations and educational institutions with a shared booth to exhibit their work.

ABOUT THE REGIONAL CLIMATE WEEKS

Organized every year in Africa, Latin America & Caribbean, and Asia-Pacific, the Regional Climate Weeks are unique collaborative platforms for government and non-Party stakeholders to address the full spectrum of climate issues under one umbrella and unity of purpose. The central aim is to bring together diverse stakeholders in the public and private sectors around the common goal of addressing climate change.

APCW ORGANIZERS

Organized by the United Nations Climate Change in partnership with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and other international and regional organizations, which include the United Nations Environment Programme, the UNEP DTU Partnership, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank Group, the Asian Development Bank, the International Emissions Trading Association, the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies and the Climate Technology Centre and Network.

To learn more, visit www.regionalclimateweeks.org (available in English, Spanish, French and Portuguese).

For further questions on how to get involved, contact the climate week team at Climate-Week@unfccc.int

Join the conversation on social media using the hashtag #ClimateWeekAP

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

These events provide a perfect readymade template for organising similar future events in Travel & Tourism.

LEAD STORY 6:

Gender equality, education and environment lead new SDG Advocate campaigns



Action, ambition and political will are the driving forces behind the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UN Photo/Manuel Elias

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 14 August 2019 - Back in May 2019, six innovative public figures joined the battle to push the world towards reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Each of the new official [SDG Advocates](#) committed themselves to pursue the 17 goals on behalf of “peace, prosperity, people, planet, and partnerships.”

As we inch closer to the [SDG Summit](#) in September, UN News caught up with some of them.

Marta Vieira da Silva: ‘Gender equality’ makes development sustainable



Brazilian footballer “Marta” not only plays for the Orlando Pride in the National Women’s Soccer League and the Brazil national team as a forward, but with 17 goals – the same number as the SDGs! – she is the top scorer ever at FIFA World Cup tournaments - that’s both for the men and women’s championships.

This UN Women Goodwill Ambassador said she is “fully committed” to lend her voice and life experience “to ensure that women and girls around the world have the same opportunities that men and boys have to fulfill their potential”.

“Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are the direct objectives of Goal 5, but they also play a key role in the achievement of many other goals, as well as supporting the overall success of the SDGs”, said the 33-year-old champion.

“There really can be no development that is sustainable without gender equality”, she stressed.

Ms. da Silva became an SDG Advocate because she wanted “to help inspire many more girls and

women, boys and men, to think of gender equality as a catalyst to create opportunities so that the next generation doesn't have to go through what I did".

She recounted that born in a small town, in a poor family, "prejudice and lack of opportunities hurt me many times along the way".

"It hurt when the boys did not let me play, it hurt when adult coaches from opposing teams took me out of championships, because I was a girl", she recalled. "It hurt to leave my family to play professional football at age 14; but to see how my mother never gave up was my greatest inspiration".

The footballer is using that same strength and commitment "to support the Secretary-General to promote the Goals, raise awareness, maintain global commitment and call for greater ambition and scalable action to achieve the [SDGs](#) by 2030, leaving no one behind.

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim: Climate change is 'the mother of all battles'



She elaborated that indigenous peoples don't see "any difference between economic and social issues and environmental protection".

"Nature gives us food, medicine, clean air and pure water", she explained. "Nature is the basis of our economy and keeps us in balance to cohabitate peacefully among communities".

Calling it "the mother of all battles", Ms. Ibrahim said that "the international community should focus all of its efforts on fighting climate change".

"The reality is, if we don't address the climate crisis our biodiversity will disappear, our oceans will die, and the poorest and marginalized communities

around the world will suffer", underscored the [SDG Advocate](#). "Fighting climate change is more than an objective, it is a battle that will require every human on this living planet to join".

The Chadian activist sees her [SDG advocate](#) role as "a bridge between the UN System and those who are left behind", saying that she wants to be "the voice" of those who are silenced, the most vulnerable and of Indigenous Peoples solutions.

"They have so much to bring to the table, if only global leaders could take the time to listen to them", she upheld. In the coming months, Ms. Ibrahim will be advocating for her "indigenous sisters and brothers" throughout international conventions, including the UN Climate Change Conference and Convention on Biological Diversity.

"I will do my best to bring concrete solutions, on the ground, where they are needed the most", she asserted.

Edward Ndopu: Disability and possibility 'belong in the same sentence'



Twenty-nine-year-old Eddie Ndopu is used to beating the odds. Aged two, the African human rights and disability advocate was diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy, with a life expectancy of five years.

The new [SDG Advocate](#) aims to inspire greater ambition by reaching one of his "most ambitious goals to date", which is to deliver a televised address to the UN from outer space. "In so doing", he asserted that he would be "the first physically disabled person to travel into space".

According to Mr. Ndopu, his disability "is just one aspect" of his life and he wants "to show the world

that the words ‘disability’ and ‘possibility’ belong in the same sentence”.

“I want to address the UN from space to show young people who represent a cross-section of society that with a larger than life personality and a bit of human ingenuity, there’s nothing one cannot achieve, including the Global Goals for Sustainable Development”, he hammered home.

He heard about the SDGs in 2015 while participating in the World Economic Forum on Africa in Cape Town, before the UN General Assembly adopted the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).

“The global goals represent a comprehensive, holistic package of ideals and ideas for creating the world we as humanity aspire for”, he told UN News. “I am deeply passionate about ensuring that the needs and aspirations of the most vulnerable and neglected segments of society are reflected in all of the SDGs, so that the agenda – in its entirety – speaks to everyone, equally”.

A disabled person is seldom seen “in the driver’s seat of international development, changing the world in real time”, he said.

“I want to demonstrate to children with disabilities, using my life as a point of reference, that they can grow up to become the protagonists in the story of their own lives”, that “they themselves are the ones they have been waiting for”, he concluded.

Dia Mirza: The environment is ‘essential’



Bollywood actress, Miss Asia Pacific 2000, and UN Environment Programme Goodwill Ambassador, Dia Mirza added the title of SDG Advocate, because “the SDG Goals themselves are the real inspiration

to everything; for people, peace and the planet”.

“This is the platform that I am grateful for, because it allows the voice of protection to reach citizens of the world, influencers, and policymakers, that can help all of us to be the change”, she said.

Of all the goals, Ms. Mirza sees it as “essential” that people and Governments accept the fact that “if we do not secure the health of the environment we can never hope to progress”.

“The health, survival, justice, and peace of our people are directly impacted by climate action”, she spelled out.

Hailing from India, she noted that her country “will soon become the most populous nation”.

“I hope to ensure that my work in advocacy policy implementation and human behavioral changes will lead to securing the health of the environment”, she explained, pointing out the need for clean air, water and soil along with “an effective waste management system that is practiced nationwide”.

Ms. Mirza also hopes “to be able to ensure that extended producer-responsibility is implemented”, that forests and wildlife are protected and that rivers are rejuvenated and clean.

“Children are at the center of my focus as they are most affected by climate injustice and environmental degradation”, the SDG Advocate concluded.

Muhammad Sanusi II: Education, decent jobs: Africa’s ‘a silver bullet’



Muhammadu Sanusi II, Emir of Kano, became involved with the SDGs, prior to the 2030 Agenda’s official launch, when he was the Governor of the

Central Bank of Nigeria, from 2009 to 2014.

At that time, he closely followed the Millennium Development Goal projects in Nigeria led by Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, who was then the President's Special Adviser on MDGs.

Having witnessed the transition from MDGs to SDGs, he explained to UN News that he is using his present role to “push the goals through”, saying that focusing on them “is critical to lifting my people out of poverty”.

His Royal Highness is equally passionate about two SDGs: Quality Education (SDG4) and Decent Jobs and employment (SDG8) – with an emphasis on the role of women.

“If you educate the girl child, you deal with so many issues like domestic violence, gender inequality, maternal and child mortality, high fertility rates etc. and also make progress towards breaking the inter-generational cycle of illiteracy and poverty”, he said. “So, if you are looking for a single silver bullet that will address many of these issues on the African continent, in my mind it will be to focus on providing the girl child an education and the opportunity to earn income and contribute meaningfully to the society”.

Even with education, “you still need to provide economic opportunities”, the Emir continued, adding “which is why at the macro level, we need to get policies right” by investing in “power, skills and infrastructure.”

“If you educate girls and women, and provide them those opportunities, you begin to really address many of the other SDGs”, he concluded.

Human rights at the fore: Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Nadia Murad



The sixth new SDG Advocate, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking, Nadia Murad, has been a loud voice for human rights, while also drawing attention to the plight of hundreds of thousands of displaced children.

A human trafficking survivor herself, the 26-year-old Yazadi woman from Iraq was sold into sexual slavery by the ISIL terrorist group.

While unable to speak with UN News, specifically for this story, she told the Security Council that the international community must “shoulder the responsibility” to rescue those still missing and in captivity, since 2014, when the terror group asserted control over large swathes of Iraq and Syria.

[Listen to her in the audio feature](#) from UN News's Daniel Johnson, associated with this story, talking about the importance of bringing perpetrators of sexual slavery to justice.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

These Ambassadors should be on top of the invitation list as speakers at all Travel & Tourism forums and events. Will certainly accelerate industry action and attract media attention.

LEAD STORY 7:

Asia-Pacific economic statisticians seek new ways to measure human progress



Bangkok, UN ESCAP News - With the endorsement of the 2030 Agenda, there is an increasing demand for both the production and inclusivity of statistics to leave no one behind. To support enduring national statistical capacity in the region, the Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics Week (APES) was held at the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok between 17-21 June 2019, gathering delegates from national statistics offices, central banks, academia and development organizations from 27 countries in the region.

The Week's events featured a four-day seminar convening under the theme "Integrating economic statistics in monitoring the 2030 Agenda." The seminar served as a platform to showcase key findings from national studies and research related to economic statistics and exchange good practices and methodologies in their production.

Opening the meeting, ESCAP Deputy Executive Secretary Hongjoo Hahm remarked, "The 2030 Agenda has generated much needed debate on how to measure progress; GDP may be growing but we still need to agree on what constitutes people's 'well-being' and how to measure it."

Robust and comprehensive data have critical implications as litmus tests for SDG achievement. Though almost half of the indicators in the global SDG monitoring framework require economic statistics, many countries in the region struggle with basic statistics on the economy.

The meeting also focused on disseminating economic statistics for use by the broader community. Through interactive panel discussions, delegates shared practical ways to communicate economic statistics to various users and stakeholders.

Economic statistics are required for the calculation of substantial number of global SDG indicators. The advent of big data, technologies, and techniques challenge traditional way of measuring economic statistics. The high-level panel of experts explored the use of economic statistics for monitoring the 2030 Agenda and highlight shortcomings of current measurements of economic activity across social and environmental aspects of well-being. The session experts dwelt on this background and pointed out ways and directions for transforming economic statistics to ensure its continued relevance.

One session was dedicated specifically at tourism to generate better understanding of the potential for the application of emerging new techniques in tourism statistics, particularly in respect of the quality aspects required of official statistics and filling data gaps required for the SDGs. The session focussed on ways to bring together the expertise of participants to analyse how well the new techniques compare with and could be combined with existing sources for official statistics and other possible admin data sources.



Mohd Yazid Kasim, Department of Statistics Malaysia noted, “Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics Week is a platform where knowledge on different areas of economic statistics is shared through analytical research, contributing greatly to the Regional Programme for Improvement of Economic Statistics in the Asia and Pacific Region through research products. This year’s theme underscores the importance of economic statistics in implementing the 2030 Agenda.”

To highlight important emerging developments, three special sessions featured current work on economic statistics, including ESCAP’s initiative on the ocean economy and Oceans Accounts Partnership. Brandishing standardized statistics about the ocean and its resources, the Partnership aims to advance economic activity from the seas while ensuring its sustainability.

On the final day, the Steering Group for the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics (RPES) met to review progress in the implementation of the second phase of the programme (2014-2019) and provide recommendations for its final phase. The Steering Group comprises chief statisticians and directors from national statistical offices and central banks, as well as international development partner experts. As part of RPES, the Steering Group aims to improve soundness of economic analysis and policies through the availability and effective use of timely, reliable and comparable economic statistics.

“The main agenda item for the Steering Group meeting is to re-cast the Programme to align with the 2030 Agenda, more specifically with the Declaration to Navigate Policy to Leave No One Behind and the Collective Vision and Framework for Action, agreed by the Chief Statisticians from Asia-Pacific countries as the shared ambition for the region’s statistical community for the 2030 Agenda,” explained Mohd Yazid Kasim, Co-Chair of the Steering Group.

The Asia-Pacific Economic Statistics Week is an annual forum in which normative and analytical products on the generation and dissemination of economic statistics are deliberated by member States and development partners.

For full details, presentations and more information visit: <http://communities.unescap.org/asia-pacific-economic-statistics/2019-asia-pacific-economic-statistics-week>

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

For decades now, the traditional means of measuring “success” in Travel & Tourism has been a headcount of total visitor arrivals and expenditure patterns. This is now on the way to being replaced by more balanced ways of measuring success. Asia-Pacific statisticians are working on this in earnest. The outcome over the next few years will be a much more stable and sustainable industry.

LEAD STORY 8:

ASEAN Mayors Forum to Make Cities Sustainable and Liveable



Jakarta by night. Pix courtesy: Pixabay

Bangkok (UN ESCAP News) – More than 300 participants including mayors, representatives of local governments and local government associations from all ASEAN member states will gather at the UN Conference Centre (UNCC) between 26 - 28 August 2019 to discuss about local actions for sustainable and inclusive growth.

The particular dynamics of urbanisation in Asia calls for ASEAN mayors' active work to prevent and mitigate its adverse consequences. According to the UN, the world's populations that live in urban areas will increase from currently 55 to 68 per cent in 2050, equivalent to 2.5 billion more people in cities. Similar pattern is projected in Southeast Asia. While only 36 per cent of ASEAN's populations lived in urban areas in 2014, around 90 million more people will move to cities in 2030.

Urbanisation in ASEAN presents ample opportunities for economic prosperity and social advancement, if well managed. Many of the fastest-growing cities in Southeast Asia are expected to drive almost 40 per cent of GDP growth through 2030. Whether this prospect will be fully realised depends on ASEAN's abilities to address a broad-range of challenges, while

accommodating new city dwellers and ensuring high-quality public services to all citizens.

Among the key issues facing ASEAN is the need to sustain economic development without compromising environmental conditions and worsening inequalities. While ASEAN's urban population has grown by 3 per cent annually, the rate of CO₂ emission has increased by 6.1 per cent. The Asia-Pacific SDGs Progress Report 2017 points that the region has not successfully reduced inequalities and, in fact, is the only sub-region with widening inequalities. Adding to these challenges is that the on-going urbanisation will expose more people to natural disasters. In 2030, ASEAN's citizens who live in extreme risk areas will likely increase by 50 per cent, as compared to 2015.

Driving Local Actions for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth

The ASEAN Mayors Forum (AMF) was originally conceived in 2011 when visionary mayors in Southeast Asia met for the first time in Surabaya, Indonesia, to demonstrate the importance of local



Manila urban sprawl. Pix: JC Gellidon, unsplash.com

contributions to ASEAN's regional integration. The Forum has gained prominence since 2015, with successive AMF meetings to discuss the ASEAN Community building and how mayors can help accelerate its progress and benefits for citizens. The role of local governments has been enhanced due to the wide recognition that at least 60 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set under the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development cannot be achieved without actions at the local level.

ASEAN is intensifying its collective efforts to promote sustainable development and address the urban challenges. In 2017, a report on Complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: A Framework for Action, was published in partnership with UN ESCAP. The report was among the first initiatives to enhance complementarities between regional and global efforts to achieve the SDGs. It identifies five priority areas for ASEAN's actions: 1) poverty eradication; 2) infrastructure and connectivity; 3) sustainable management of natural resources; 4) sustainable production and consumption, and 5) resilience.

The Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 (MPAC), under its sustainable infrastructure component, sets a goal to scale up the sharing of smart urbanisation models across cities in ASEAN. To support MPAC's objectives, the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Strategy (ASUS) was published in 2018. The Strategy presents detailed

analysis on the impacts of ASEAN's urbanisation and identifies priority areas for Member States and their partners to take actions. It points out that rapid economic growth, coupled with expanding urban population, has made a centralised form of governance difficult to sustain and less responsive to public service demands.

In light of cities' growing responsibilities on sustainable development, the United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific (UCLG ASPAC), which serves as the AMF Secretariat, collaborated with Cities Alliance and other institutions to develop a report on City Enabling Environment Rating: Assessment of the Countries in Asia and the Pacific (CEE) in March 2018. The publication provides insights on critical factors that enable effective decentralisation and local governance in 28 countries including in ASEAN.

Building on the CEE and other sources, UN ESCAP with UN-Habitat, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the European Union (EU), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Rockefeller Foundation and Singapore's Centre for Liveable Cities (CLC) is preparing the Future of Asia-Pacific Cities Report 2019 which will promote the means of implementation for cities to effectively plan, build resilience, apply smart technologies and finance efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Inputs from these reports will serve as discussion frameworks at the upcoming AMF meeting and the 7th Asia-Pacific Urban Forum during 15-17 October in Penang, Malaysia.

5th AMF Meeting Objectives

The ASEAN Mayors Forum (AMF) has been advocating for local governments' indispensable roles and contributions to the ASEAN and global development, notably the UN SDGs, the New Urban Agenda (NUA), the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR). While local governments in Southeast Asia are embracing the benefits of urbanisation, their leadership and capacity need stronger support, collaboration and engagements at all levels.

The 5th AMF will serve as a platform for discussions among ASEAN's local political leaders, national policy makers, international development partners and other experts, on how cities and local governments can collaborate in the priority areas set forth for ASEAN's SDG implementation as well as other relevant frameworks to address urbanisation challenges.

In line with Thailand's ASEAN Chairmanship, this year's AMF will be held in Bangkok and will contribute to the overarching theme of the Chair country: Advancing Partnership for Sustainability. The event will be jointly organised by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA), the United Nations Economic Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP), the European Union (EU) and the United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific (UCLG ASPAC).

The 5th AMF will aim at Driving Local Actions for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth to support ASEAN's efforts to accelerate SDGs achievements while ensuring effective management of urbanisation, protecting environment and inclusive growth. The meeting discussions will be framed by the following sub-themes: Digital ASEAN (future-oriented), Seamless ASEAN (enhanced connectivity), and Sustainable ASEAN (sustainability in all dimensions).

Objectives and focus of the discussions take into account the AMF's relevance, linkages and contributions to other ASEAN cooperation frameworks such as the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN). Outcomes of the 5th AMF meetings and recommendations put forward by ASEAN Mayors will feed into the 7th Asia-Pacific Urban Forum, which will be held in Penang, Malaysia, from 15-17 October 2019.

Expected Participants

The event will draw up to 300 participants, with more than 100 mayors/governors, senior of local governments officials and representatives of local government associations from all ASEAN member states. Other participants will include the Permanent Representatives to and Secretariat of ASEAN, national government representatives, policy makers, academics, technical experts, development partner countries and institutions, specialised agencies and private sector representatives.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Because all tourism begins and ends in cities, the quality of life in cities assumes critical importance. Good "quality" cities attract visitors, business and create prosperity. Unfortunately, with the exception of Singapore, nearly all the ASEAN cities do not quite measure up. The "Smart Cities" projects may make a difference but it's going to be a long, arduous and expensive project.



SECTION 2



SDG 2:

**World food security
at risk due to
'unprecedented'
climate change
impact**



UNDP Chad/Jean Damascene Hakuzim Desertification threatens the village of Tantaverom. Mbo Malloumu has taken the initiative to plant acacia seedlings to rehabilitate the land. In the past 50 years, Lake Chad basin shrank from 25,000 square kilometers to 2,000 square kilometers.



SDG 2: World food security at risk due to 'unprecedented' climate change impact

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 8 August 2019 - More than 500 million people today live in areas affected by erosion linked to climate change, the UN warned on Thursday, before urging all countries to commit to sustainable land use to help limit greenhouse gas emissions before it is too late.

Speaking at the launch of a Special Report on Climate Change and Land by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in Geneva, [experts highlighted](#) how the rise in global temperatures, linked to increasing pressures on fertile soil, risked jeopardizing food security for the planet.

Humans affect more than 70 per cent of ice-free land and a quarter is already degraded, noted Valérie Masson-Delmotte, Co-Chair of one of three Working Groups that contributed to the bumper 1,200-page report.

"Today 500 million people live in areas that experience desertification," she told journalists. "People living in already degraded or desertified areas are increasingly negatively affected by climate change."

Plant-based food and fuels, key to climate change fight

This soil degradation has a direct impact on the amount of carbon the earth is able to contain, Dr. Masson-Delmotte explained.

Amid recent reports that more than 820 million people are undernourished around the world, Co-chair of another Working Group, Jim Skea, highlighted the fact that up to 30 per cent of food is lost or wasted.

In future, countries should consider all options to tackle loss and waste, thereby reducing the pressure on land and the resulting greenhouse gas emissions, including by growing plant-based, or so-called "bio" fuels, he said.

"Limiting global warming to 1.5 or even two degrees (Celsius) will involve removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and land has a critical role to play in carbon dioxide removal," Dr Skea insisted. "Agricultural practices can help build up carbon in soils, but it could also mean using more bio-energy with or without carbon capture and storage and expanding forests."

Produced by 107 scientists from more than 50 countries across all regions of the world – with more than half of the contributing authors from developing nations - the IPCC report provides a peer-based review of the latest research on land use today.

According to the IPCC report, agriculture, forestry and other land use contribute to around a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions, a fact that policy-makers should consider when considering how they should invest to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change.

“Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from all sectors is essential if we want to keep the load two degrees Celsius,” said Debra Roberts, Co-Chair of Working Group II, before cautioning that there were “limits to the scale of energy crops and afforestation that could be used to achieve this goal”.

Reason for hope, if immediate action is taken

The need for immediate action in the face of a warming planet was underlined by another Working Group Co-Chair, Hans-Otto Pörtner, who stressed that there was “no possibility for anybody to say, ‘Oh, climate change is happening and we (will) just adapt to it.’ The capacity to adapt is limited.”

Despite the challenges many countries face from climate-change related pressures on land, positive action was needed now, Dr Pörtner maintained, amid estimates that the global population is set to reach around 10 billion by 2050.

“There are some regions and some places, especially in the lower latitudes where vulnerability is extreme,” he said. “But even in those countries, when there is an emphasis on adaptation in their development strategies, mitigation should play a key role.”

Before Thursday’s report launch, the text had to be assessed and approved by 195 Member States, a process that took longer than expected on Wednesday. In addition to the Special Report on Climate Change and Land, the IPCC plans to release its latest findings on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate next month, ahead of the UN Climate Action Summit on 23 September in New York.

The IPCC was established by the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1988 to provide policymakers with regular scientific assessments concerning climate change, its implications and potential future risks, and to put forward adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Amid recent reports that more than 820 million people are undernourished around the world, Co-chair of another Working Group, Jim Skea, highlighted the fact that up to 30 per cent of food produced, is simply lost or wasted.

In future, countries should consider all options to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including by growing plant-based fuels, he said.

“Limiting global warming to one point five or even to decrease will involve removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and learned has a critical role to play in carbon dioxide removal,” he added.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

This is one area where Travel & Tourism can be a major part of the solution. The industry occupies considerable tracts of land for projects like golf courses, theme parks and resorts, often by converting former agricultural land. But it has a good track record in terms of utilising degraded land. However, we can make a much more positive contribution by promoting organic agriculture, tree planting and many more such quality land-use activities.



SDG 2:

**Help African farmers
cope with climate
change threats**



*A farmer near the town of Kisumu in Kenya tills his land.
(file 2015) World Bank/Peter Kapuscinski*



SDG 2: Help African farmers cope with climate change threats

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 6 August 2019 - African farmers need help to cope with the threats of climate change, with national policies that protect them and make them resilient, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, FAO, has declared, following a major conference on food security in the continent.

In a statement released at the conclusion of the high-level Africa Food Security Leadership Dialogue, in the Rwandan capital, Kigali, the [FAO](#) stated that building resilience is one of the agency's priorities in Africa, and is key to meeting the challenge of feeding over two billion by 2050.

Small-scale food producers and their families, says the UN agency, are particularly vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change, but they have always been innovators: "What they need are policies that protect them and increase their resilience to climate change", Helen Semedo, FAO's Deputy Director-General, told the conference. "They need access to information, technology, and investment, and they should be brought to the conversation on innovation".

According to the latest FAO data, hunger is on the rise in almost all parts of Africa, and the continent has the highest prevalence of undernourishment in the world, at almost 20 percent.

The situation, which is attributed mainly to conflict and climate change, is particularly acute in Eastern nations, where almost one-third of the population struggles to find enough to eat.

On Monday, participants – who heard that adaptation to climate risks is possible if there is immediate and bold action taken to build resilience – endorsed a commitment to do more to help African countries to improve their food security.

The aim of the Leadership Dialogue is to engage governments and key development partners, and bring about unified action for Africa's agriculture and food systems in response to climate change.

The two-day event was hosted by the Government of Rwanda, in partnership with the FAO, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Bank.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

In fact, farmers everywhere will be hit by climate change, creating monstrous problems for the entire agriculture sector worldwide. That will then no longer be an economic challenge but a social and political one. And then what?



SDG 4:

**‘Preserve, revitalize
and promote’
indigenous
languages, or lose a
‘wealth of traditional
knowledge’**



“Izhor” Indigenous people in Russia keep they language and traditions. Photo: Dmitry Kharakka-Zaitsev



SDG 4: ‘Preserve, revitalize and promote’ indigenous languages, or lose a ‘wealth of traditional knowledge’

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 9 August 2019 - Secretary-General António Guterres underscored the urgency to “preserve, revitalize and promote indigenous languages” in his [message](#) for the [International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples](#), celebrated on Friday.

“Languages are how we communicate, and they are inextricably linked to our cultures, histories and identity”, the UN chief said, noting that 2019 also marks the International Year of Indigenous Languages.

He pointed out that almost half of the world’s estimated 6,700 languages, which are mostly indigenous, risk extinction. “With every language that disappears, the world loses a wealth of traditional knowledge” said Mr. Guterres.

Noting that a significant proportion of the estimated 370 million indigenous people in the world today “still lack basic rights, with systematic discrimination and exclusion continuing to threaten ways of life, cultures and identities”, the UN chief stressed that this contradicts the UN [Declaration](#) on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, “with its promise to leave no one behind”.

Offering the UN’s support to realize “the rights and aspirations of indigenous peoples”, the Secretary-General concluded: “I count on Member States to engage and support indigenous peoples in determining their own development through policies that are inclusive, equitable and accessible”.

Education ‘pivotal’

As part of this year’s commemoration, the UN organized an event at its Headquarters in New York featuring expert panels and innovators on indigenous languages and technology. But it opened with a ceremonial call to order by Chief Howard Thompson of the United States’ Mohawk Nation.

“People listen for a few moments”, he said. “This is our way when we gather anywhere to give thanks”.

He began by first acknowledging that everyone had “arrived safely and are healthy” before giving thanks to Mother Earth, Grandmother Moon, the stars and the creator, saying “we give thanks daily because it may not be here tomorrow”.

When Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed took the podium, she zeroed-in on the “pivotal role” of education for indigenous people to “enjoy and preserve their culture and identity.

“Intercultural and multi-lingual education are necessary to prevent irreparable loss”, she said. “Failure to provide multilingual and inter-cultural education puts indigenous peoples at a disadvantage, threatening their very survival”.

Ms. Mohammed accentuated that more must be done to enable indigenous languages to flourish, “so we may retain the wealth of knowledge and cultures that are part of the world’s rich diversity”.

“On this International Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to work together to realize the rights of indigenous peoples”, she concluded.

Symbols of identity

Through a video message, General Assembly President María Fernanda Espinosa called indigenous people “the bearers of millenary knowledge systems” where ancient and distinct languages are central.



UN Headquarters in New York celebrates the 2019 International Day of the World’s Indigenous People, which is being dedicated to indigenous peoples’ languages. (9 August 2019), by UN News/Elizabeth Scaffidi

More than a means of communication, they also provide “unique ways to see and understand the world” she stated. “They are symbols of identity and belonging; they are vehicles of values to transmit culture and connecting the indigenous peoples with nature”.

And these languages are all vulnerable, many “seriously endangered” or “on the brink of extinction”, according to Ms. Espinosa. “Others, unfortunately, have already been lost forever, taking the wisdom of their peoples with them”, she lamented.

Painting a picture of indigenous languages as “a priceless heritage and a vehicle of ancestral knowledge” on culture, medicine and astronomy , which is “vital to reach the goals of the 2030 Agenda”, she stressed that “we must defend” their rights and respect their way of life as it is “closely linked to the survival of their languages”.

Linking biological and cultural diversity

For her part, [Cristiana Paşca Palmer](#), Secretariat chief of the Convention on Biological Diversity, highlighted that although they constitute a relatively small part of the world's population, indigenous people represent “the largest portion of linguistic and cultural diversity on Earth and their traditional lands and waters overwhelmingly contain the greatest remaining reserves of biodiversity”.

She maintained that the International Day draws attention to their powerful contribution to preserving biodiversity: “It allows us to tell the story of how these communities...have been stewards of biodiversity for millennia, responsible for preserving and even increasing biodiversity through their traditional management practices”, she acknowledged.

Linking biological and cultural diversity, she spelled out that the resilience of human communities and ecosystems are under “grave threat”.

“The colourful tapestry of life is fading like watercolours in the rain”, she bemoaned. “The loss of indigenous, traditional and local languages is closely related to biodiversity loss”.

Moreover, she stated that their local and traditional communities’ languages are “representative of diverse world views, value systems and cultural expressions”.

“Let us commit ourselves to restoring indigenous languages as the vibrant colours of the tapestry of life”, she urged.

In closing, Ms. Palmer emphasized the “centrality of traditional and indigenous languages in strengthening the links between biological and cultural diversity for attaining the global [2050 vision](#) of humanity living in harmony with nature”.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Extinction of languages is just as important as extinction of natural habitats, wildlife and flora and fauna. Yet the Travel & Tourism sector does not give it half as much attention as it deserves. When was the last time linguistic heritage was celebrated at an international travel forum?



SDG 4:

‘We are facing a learning crisis’, UN chief warns



Students in Primary Seven at Zanaki Primary School in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, during an English language class. Sarah Farhat/World Bank



SDG 4: ‘We are facing a learning crisis’, UN chief warns

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 11 August 2019 -- Schools are “not equipping young people with the skills they need to navigate the technological revolution”, UN Secretary-General António Guterres warned, in a [message](#) released to mark the UN’s International Youth Day.

Transforming Education is the theme for this year, which comes at a time when the world is facing a “learning crisis”, says Mr Guterres, and students need not only to learn, “but to learn how to learn”.

The UN’s Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), which is co-organising the Day alongside the UN Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO), [says that](#) statistics demonstrate that significant transformations are still required to make education systems more inclusive and accessible: only 10% of people have completed upper secondary education in low income countries; 40 % of the global population is not taught in a language they speak or fully understand; and over 75 % of secondary school age refugees are out of school.

Ensuring access to inclusive and equitable education, and promoting lifelong learning, is

one of the [goals](#) of the UN’s [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), and International Youth Day 2019, will present examples that show how education is changing to meet modern challenges.

The role of young people as champions of inclusive and accessible education is also being highlighted, as youth-led organizations are helping to transform education, through lobbying, advocacy, and partnerships with educational institutions.

“Education today should combine knowledge, life skills and critical thinking”, said Mr. Guterres. It should include information on sustainability and climate change. And it should advance gender equality, human rights and a culture of peace”.

All these elements are included in [Youth 2030](#), the UN’s strategy to scale up global, regional and national actions to meet young people’s needs, realize their rights and tap their possibilities as agents of change.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Powerful words: “Education today should combine knowledge, life skills and critical thinking.” Do Travel & Tourism institutes adhere to this guidance? In fact, critical thinking is very much the need of the hour across the entire industry, especially conferences and events which are increasingly becoming forums of people preaching to the converted.



SDG 4:

**Four in 10
indigenous
languages at risk of
disappearing**



Girls from an indigenous community read outdoors at Ban Pho Primary School in Bac Han District in remote Lao Cai Province, Viet Nam. UNICEF/UNI10236/Estey



SDG 4: Four in 10 indigenous languages at risk of disappearing

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 7 August 2019 - Of 7,000 indigenous languages spoken today, four in 10 are in danger of disappearing, rights experts said on Wednesday, in a call for a decade of action to reverse the “historic destruction” of age-old dialects.

In an appeal to mark the [International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples](#) on 9 August, UN-appointed experts said that “nation-building” had been largely responsible for “ongoing discrimination” against native speakers.

“Over time, such policies can undermine and effectively destroy a culture and even a people”, the experts cautioned, before insisting that indigenous languages allowed freedom of expression and conscience that are critical to people’s dignity, culture and political representation.

The experts – who include panels that report to the [Human Rights Council](#) (HRC) and the Economic and Social Council ([ECOSOC](#)), along with a UN-appointed investigator known as a Special Rapporteur, commended States that support a Decade of Indigenous Languages.

“Ten years would provide the time and resources necessary to reverse the historic destruction of indigenous languages and reclaim these languages for the future of indigenous peoples and the world community, alike,” they said.

In line with a special UN Declaration, indigenous peoples everywhere are recognized as having the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit their languages to future generations.

Importantly, this includes the right to establish and control education, media, and the institutions that govern them, the UN-appointed independent experts noted.

“We call on UN member States to recognise, protect and promote indigenous languages through legislation, policies and other strategies in full cooperation with indigenous peoples,” the experts said, underlining the need for “sustained support for bilingual and mother tongue education...access to health, employment, judicial and other public services in the languages of indigenous peoples, including through cyberspace and the internet”.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Anyone ever done a study on how linguistic extinction will impact on culture and heritage, and by extension, on Travel & Tourism? If so, I would love to hear about it. Today's young generation is growing up speaking "emoji" and "stickers."



SDG 5:

**Greater investment
in family-friendly
policies critical
to support
breastfeeding –
UNICEF**



A woman breast feeds her premature baby at the UNICEF supported Maternity ward of the State University Hospital in Port au Prince, Haiti. UNICEF/Marco Dormino



SDG 5: Greater investment in family-friendly policies critical to support breastfeeding – UNICEF

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 31 July 2019
- While the benefits of breastfeeding for both children and mothers are extensive, policies that support nursing, particularly in workplaces, are not yet available to most mothers worldwide, the Head of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said on Wednesday.

“The health, social and economic benefits of breastfeeding – for mother and child – are well-established and accepted throughout the world”, according to [UNICEF](#) Executive Director Henrietta Fore. “Yet, nearly 60 per cent of the world's infants are missing out on the recommended six months of exclusive breastfeeding”.

From supporting healthy brain development in babies and young children, protecting infants against infection, decreasing the risk of obesity and disease, reducing healthcare costs and protecting nursing mothers against ovarian cancer and breast cancer, the benefits are widespread.

“We need far greater investment in paid parental leave and breastfeeding support across all workplaces to increase breastfeeding rates globally”, Ms. Fore underscored.

Kicking off World Breastfeeding Week

From 1 to 7 August each year, [World Breastfeeding Week](#) highlights the critical importance of nursing for children across the globe.

This year, the commemoration is accompanied by a fact sheet with new data from the [2019 Global Breastfeeding Scorecard](#), which revealed, among other things, that only four out of 10 babies in 2018 were exclusively breastfed.

Babies in rural areas were breastfed more than for their urban counterparts and at 23.9 per cent, upper-middle-income countries had the lowest breastfeeding rates.

Breastfeeding at work

UNICEF recommends regular lactation breaks during working hours to accommodate breastfeeding or expressing breastmilk, along with a supportive environment, which includes facilities that enable mothers to continue breastfeeding for six months, followed by age-appropriate complementary breastfeeding.

However, working women lack adequate support.

Worldwide, only 40 per cent of women with newborns have basic maternity benefits at their workplace. And in some African countries, only 15 per cent of mothers with newborns have any benefits at all to support continued breastfeeding.

Paid parental leave

While standards in the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Maternity Protection Convention 2000 include at least 14 weeks of paid maternity leave, it recommends at least 18 weeks, as well as workplace support for breastfeeding families. And yet, only 12 per cent of countries worldwide provide sufficient paid maternity leave.

UNICEF's latest brief on family-friendly policy calls for at least six months of paid leave for all parents combined, of which 18 weeks should be reserved for mothers. Governments and businesses should strive for at least nine months of combined paid leave.

Longer maternity leave means higher chances of breastfeeding.

A recent study found that women with six months or more maternity leave were at least 30 per cent more likely to maintain any breastfeeding for at

least the first six months. Increasing breastfeeding could prevent 823,000 annual deaths in children under five and 20,000 annual deaths from breast cancer.

However, in 2018, only 43 per cent of babies worldwide were breastfed within the first hour of life.

Immediate skin-to-skin contact and early breastfeeding keeps a baby warm, builds his or her immune system, promotes bonding, boosts a mother's milk supply and increases the chances for continued exclusive breastfeeding, the UN Children's Fund said.

And the benefits do not end there. Breastmilk is more than just food for babies, it is also a potent medicine for disease prevention that is tailored to the needs of each child – with the 'first milk', called colostrum, so rich in antibodies that it protects babies from disease and death.

Moreover, optimal breastfeeding would reduce global healthcare costs by an estimated \$300 billion.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

How many Travel & Tourism companies abide by the UNICEF recommendation for regular lactation breaks during working hours to accommodate breastfeeding or expressing breastmilk, along with a supportive environment? I would wager not too many.



SDG 8:

**UNCTAD chief cites
ways to reignite
investment flows**

SDG 8: UNCTAD chief cites ways to reignite investment flows



By Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD

Geneva, 15 August 2019 -- International investment flows have been weak for a decade. Last year, global foreign direct investment fell again, by 13%, the third consecutive decline. While developed countries have seen the largest drops in FDI, flows to developing countries have also stagnated. Only developing Asia is still showing moderate growth.

The stagnating FDI trend of the past decade can be ascribed to a range of factors.

First, the nature of FDI flows is changing. The adoption of digital technologies in global supply chains is causing a shift towards intangibles and increasingly asset-light forms of international production, which is also visible in a slowdown in global value chains. This has important implications for developing countries, which

rely on investment in physical productive assets and on participation in global value chains for their development.

Second, there has been a significant decline in rates of return on FDI. The global rate of return on inward FDI dropped below 7% in 2017, a decrease of almost two points compared to a decade ago. Although rates of return remain higher on average in developing and transition economies, most regions have not escaped this erosion.

Third, the international trade and investment policy climate has become generally less favourable. At the international level, the investment policy regime is in flux. It is made up of more than 3,000 investment agreements, with many gaps, overlaps and inconsistencies. At the national level, investment policies are no longer universally moving in the direction of greater openness. Restrictions and regulation of investment are on the rise.

Long-term concerns

This troubling global investment picture is a long-term concern for policymakers worldwide. At the United Nations, we recognise the gravity of this issue as investment is central for sustainable development and inclusive growth. The UN Conference on Trade and Development estimates the investment gap to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals at \$2.5 trillion per year in developing countries alone.

We need to mobilise more investment and channel it to where it can contribute most to sustainable development. UNCTAD plays a central role, through its policy frameworks, intergovernmental consensus building and technical assistance, which work as a point of reference and a common structure for debate and cooperation on national and international policies to channel investment to the SDGs.

UNCTAD is also the key venue for discussions on reforming the International Investment Agreement regime to make it more friendly to sustainable development. International cooperation and debate on investment issues is further bolstered by capacity building and technical assistance on investment issues through investment policy reviews, support to investment promotion agencies, and through the implementation of investment facilitation tools such as iGuides, investor information portals and electronic single windows.

Tangible results in making investment work for sustainable development show promise. More than 150 countries have used UNCTAD policy frameworks in their national and international investment policymaking. New IIAs concluded in the past few years almost all contain the key elements of UNCTAD's Reform Package for the International Investment Regime. UNCTAD's investor portals are now present in 35 developing countries and its inventory of investment facilitation tools on the global enterprise registration portal ([GER.co](https://ger.unctad.org/)) has provided a baseline for ongoing international debate on the topic.

Unlocking investment flows

Major challenges remain, however, both at the international and national levels. In the international policy environment, IIA reform now needs to tackle the vast numbers of older treaties dating from before the reform process took hold. The stock of old-generation treaties is 10 times larger than the number of modern, reform-oriented treaties. In national policy environments, greater efforts need to be made to channel investment into SDG sectors and contribute more to sustainable development.

The G7 summit provides an opportunity for global leaders to renew their commitment to a conducive global policy environment for investment in sustainable development. To achieve prosperity goals, continued access to investment in productive capacity is needed to help developing countries, especially the least-developed countries, climb the development ladder.

In addition, a conducive climate for investment is a precondition to boost financing flows to key SDG sectors including infrastructure, renewable energy, food security, water and sanitation, and others. Our latest research reveals that international investment flows in these sectors have not shown a significant upward trend since 2015, when the SDGs were launched. That worrying fact merits the attention of G7 leaders.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Investment flows in the direction where it can get the best returns. And Travel & Tourism is still a source of good returns in many parts of the world. How well we fare in comparison to other economic sectors is well worth a more detailed study in order to maximise the potential and overcome obstacles.



SDG 10:

**Meeting the
workplace equality
challenge**



SDG 10: Meeting the workplace equality challenge

Geneva, ILO News -- ILO Director-General Guy Ryder has welcomed the decision to place the fight against inequality at the heart of this year's G7 summit. Ryder, who will be attending the 24 to 26 August summit in Biarritz, France, called inequality one of the key challenges of our time.

This year's G7 French presidency has chosen the theme for the Biarritz Summit well. 'Combating inequality' is indeed one of the key challenges of our time.

The theme of combating inequality strongly aligns with the International Labour Organization's mandate for social justice, as articulated most recently by our [Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work](#) adopted by the [International Labour Conference in June 2019](#). The G7 presidency's intent for the Biarritz Summit to reaffirm the G7 members' commitment to respond to global challenges through collective action further provides important support for the declaration's call for stronger multilateralism to confront the issues facing the world of work.

The G7's labour and employment track, known this year as the G7 Social, furthered the overarching theme of France's presidency by concentrating on four goals: further integrating international labour standards into the multilateral system, supporting access to universal social protection systems, supporting individuals through digital transformation and its impact on the future of work, and promoting occupational equality between women and men. Because these themes are integral to the Decent Work Agenda, they provided the ILO with an opportunity to engage deeply with G7 members, not only by providing technical inputs on each of them but also by participating during the discussions.

In the context of the G7 Social's focus on the rapid changes in the world of work, France highlighted the importance of the ILO's centenary by welcoming Work for a brighter future, the report of the ILO's Global Commission on the Future of Work. It also emphasised the critical role played by the ILO in the multilateral debate on economic and social policy, and the importance of the ILO's

groundbreaking new international standard on violence and harassment in the world of work.

The [communiqué](#) adopted by labour and employment ministers when they met in Paris on 6–7 June 2019 reflects the work of the G7 Social through an ambitious set of goals:

- A call to action to reduce inequalities in a global world, including a multilateral dialogue and coordination for the reduction of inequalities and a commitment to promoting responsible business conduct in global supply chains;
- Commitments in favour of universal access to social protection in the changing world of work;
- Commitments to empower individuals for the future of work; and,
- Commitments to ensure gender equality in the world of work.

The ministers' communiqué and the ILO's Centenary Declaration have many strong points of convergence that reveal key areas of focus for the future of work.

The economic and social link

Both instruments stress the need to strengthen multilateralism. The G7 communiqué emphasises the inseparability of economic and social policies to reduce inequalities. This finds its counterpart in the Centenary Declaration's recognition of the "strong, complex and crucial links between social, trade, financial, economic and environmental policies", which leads to a call for the ILO to play a stronger role in broad policy dialogues among multilateral institutions. The communiqué and the accompanying G7 Social Tripartite Declaration reaffirm and implement the G7 members' commitment to social dialogue as the means of shaping the future of work we want.

Similarly, just as the G7 communiqué stresses that social protection, in line with [ILO Recommendation 202 on Social Protection Floors](#), "is instrumental in shaping the future of work", the Centenary Declaration calls on the ILO to "develop and enhance social protection systems, which are adequate, sustainable and adapted to developments in the world of work". Both instruments draw from the Report of the Global Commission, which underscores the importance of social protection systems to support people through the increasingly complex transitions they will need to navigate the changing world of work in order to realise their capabilities.

The G7 communiqué's call for empowering individuals hinges on the need to "adapt labour market support and institutions to provide decent working conditions for all platform workers" and "underline[s] the importance of harnessing the potential of current changes to create high-quality jobs for all". Addressing new business models and diverse forms of work arrangements, the Declaration, for its part, directs the ILO's efforts to "[harness] ... technological progress and productivity growth" to ensure decent work and "a just sharing of the benefits for all". Both documents draw on prior work of the ILO to call for a transformative agenda for gender equality through a broad range of policies, including by closing persistent gender gaps in pay and participation in the labour market. Both instruments recognise the persistent challenges of informality.

As the ILO begins our second century, we are preparing our next programme and budget to respond to the key priority areas identified in the Centenary Declaration. We look to the G7 summit to provide an important boost for the ILO's efforts to bring that about, and by so doing to provide our own contribution to the G7 priority of combating inequality.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Labour issues go to the heart of Travel & Tourism, and the challenge of gender equality is particularly relevant in a sector that relies heavily on female employment. Investors could previously get away with paying women less than men. No longer. Such pay gaps have long been narrowed. Travel & Tourism can prove that it is contributing significantly to this SDG.



SDG 12:

**Leading Global
Fashion and Textile
Companies Make
Commitments On
Climate, Biodiversity
and Oceans**

SDG 12: Leading Global Fashion and Textile Companies Make Commitments On Climate, Biodiversity and Oceans

FASHION PACT



PARIS--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--Ahead of the G7 meeting at Biarritz from August 24-26, French President Emmanuel Macron, accompanied by Economy and Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire, Minister of Labour Muriel Pénicaud, and Deputy Minister of Ecological and Solidary Transition Brune Poirson, has invited to the Elysée Palace representatives of the 32 fashion and textile companies who have launched the Fashion Pact by his side.

In April 2019, ahead of the G7 meeting, Emmanuel Macron had given François-Henri Pinault, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Kering, a mission to bring together the leading players in fashion and textile, with the aim of setting practical objectives for reducing the environmental impact of their industry.

In a historic move, given the scale and importance of the coalition that has been created, 32 leading companies from the fashion and textile industry have given themselves a set of shared objectives in the form of a Fashion Pact. The coalition includes groups and brands in Luxury, Fashion, Sports and Lifestyle, along with suppliers and retailers, all of whom are already involved in separate environmental strategies.

To date, the coalition comprises (in alphabetical order):

Adidas, Bestseller, Burberry, Capri Holdings Limited, Carrefour, Chanel, Ermenegildo Zegna, Everybody & Everyone, Fashion3, Fung Group, Galeries Lafayette, Gap Inc., Giorgio Armani, H&M Group, Hermes, Inditex, Karl Lagerfeld, Kering, La Redoute, Matchesfashion.Com, Moncler, Nike, Nordstrom, Prada, Puma, Pvh Corp., Ralph Lauren, Ruyi, Salvatore Ferragamo, Selfridges Group, Stella McCartney, Tapestry.

The Fashion Pact's objectives draw on the Science-Based Targets (SBT¹) initiative, which focuses on action in three essential areas for safeguarding the planet:

- **Stop global warming:** by creating and deploying an action plan for achieving the objective of zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, in order to keep global warming below a 1.5°C pathway between now and 2100.
- **Restore biodiversity:** by achieving objectives that use Science-Based Targets to restore natural ecosystems and protect species.
- **Protect the oceans:** by reducing the fashion industry's negative impact on the world's oceans through practical initiatives, such as gradually removing the usage of single-use plastics. These commitments are designed to be embraced by every company involved and backed by cross-sector initiatives, along with the deployment of innovation accelerators. Private companies, working alongside nation states, have an essential role to play in protecting the planet. With the Fashion Pact, some leading players in the fashion and textile sector are joining forces for the first time to launch an unprecedented movement. A collective endeavor by its nature, the Fashion Pact is open to any company that wants to help to fundamentally transform the practices of the fashion and textile industry, and to meet the environmental challenges of our century.

[Read the full text of the Fashion Pact](#)

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Interesting that international fashion brands have to sign a pact to uphold this. In fact, indigenous fabrics and textiles originated by placing the environment first. Then came the era of machinery and synthetics, the so-called Industrial Revolution. Will the Fourth Industrial Revolution make it any better?



SDG 13:

**New Online Report:
Visualising Global
Climate Action**



SDG 13: New Online Report: Visualising Global Climate Action

UN Climate Change News, 31 July 2019 - The UN Climate Change secretariat's [Momentum for Change initiative](#) has released an [interactive, online report](#), showcasing shining examples of diverse climate solutions from around the world.

The report tells the stories of 15 winners of the 2018 Global Climate Action Award, using infographics, animations, photos and videos.

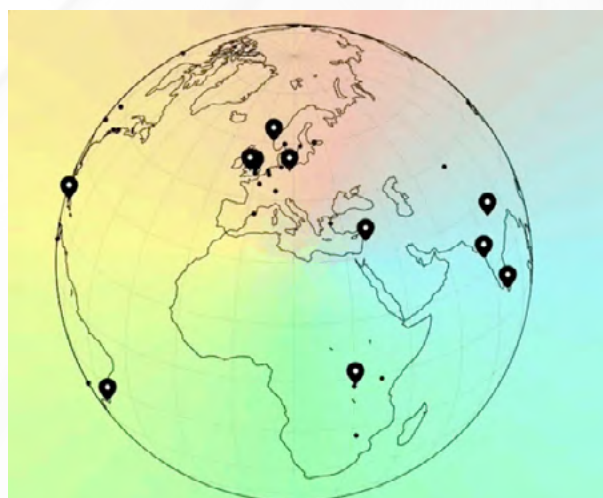
“Our Lighthouse Activities are a significant part of our wider UN Climate Change efforts to mobilize action and ambition in support of national and international climate goals,” UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa says in the report's [foreword](#). “The 15 Lighthouse Activity winners for 2018 serve as real-world reminders that climate action is not just possible—it's the path we must get on to achieve the goals laid out in Paris,” she adds.

The projects include:

- [“Yalla Let's Bike”](#) — a Syrian project, helping women defy traditional roles by promoting bicycling as a healthy and eco-friendly mode of transportation.
- [“Sri Lanka Mangrove Conservation Project”](#) — a conservation project, helping Sri Lanka become the first nation in history to preserve and replant all of its mangrove forests.
- [“Forest Green Rovers”](#) — a British project, where a local football team is working to create the “world's greenest football club”.

The interactive elements of the report demonstrate the vast number of climate projects vying for the Global Climate Action Award, while shining a light on the remarkable results that these projects have already achieved across the world.

The report demonstrates that last year, the Momentum for Change initiative received a record breaking number of applications for its annual Global Climate Action award. In total, 569 projects applied for the award, across four pillar categories: [Planetary Health](#), [Climate Neutral Now](#), [Women for Results](#) and [Climate Finance](#). Of these applications, while 331 of these projects were considered eligible.



Click [here](#) to navigate the globe — and explore the impressive award-winning climate action projects.

Data is central to the report's design, allowing readers to see an impressive by-the-numbers recap of major milestones, while at the same time feeling inspired by the hundreds of climate action already underway.

This report comes ahead of the announcement of the winners of the 2019 Global Climate Action Award, scheduled in September during Climate Week NYC.

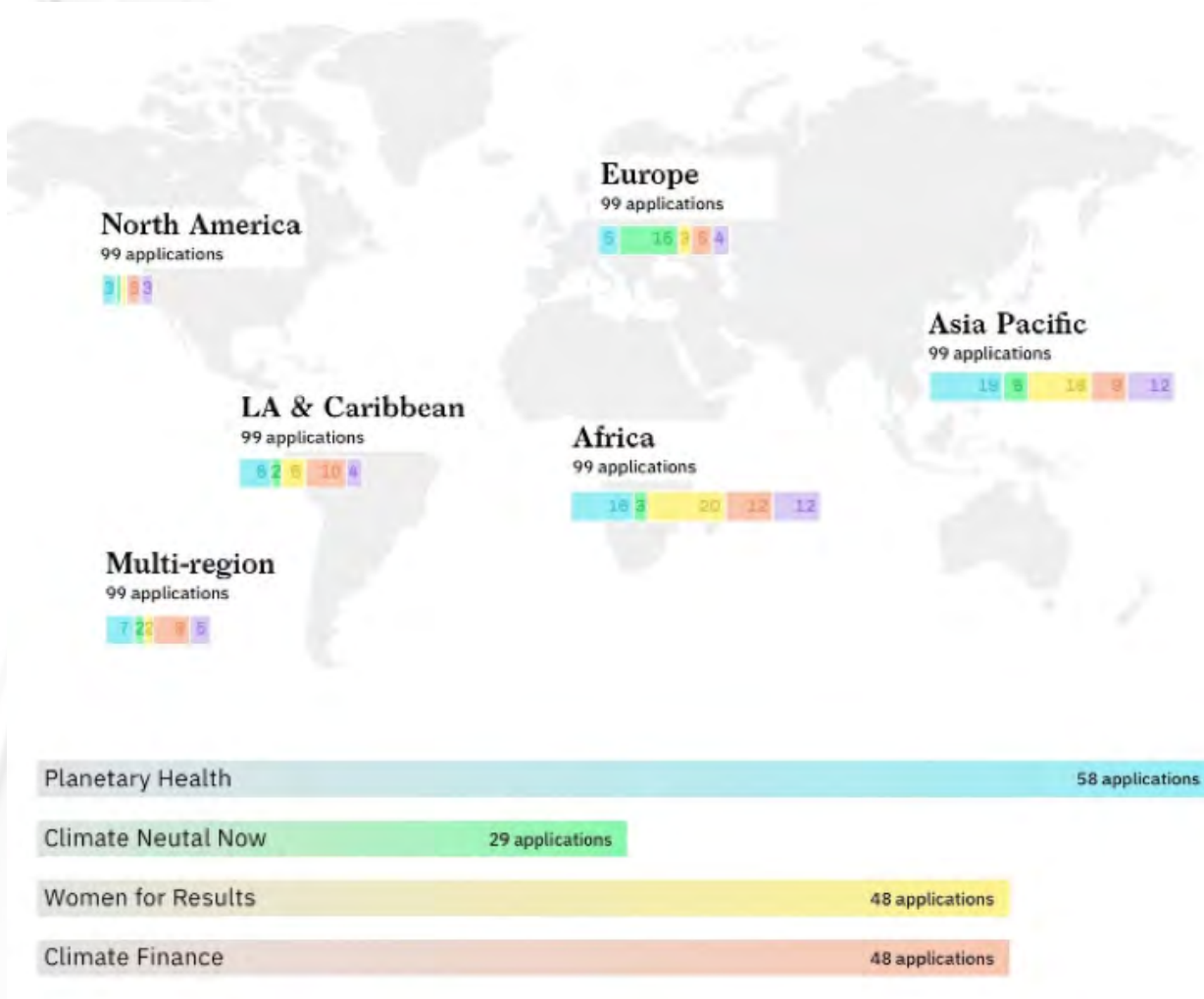
About Momentum for Change:

Through its annual Global Climate Action Award program, Momentum for Change shines a light on

the enormous groundswell of action underway across the globe that is moving the world toward a highly resilient, low-carbon future.

Momentum for Change recognizes innovative and transformative solutions that address both climate change and wider economic, social and environmental challenges.

The projects recognised by Momentum for Change are selected by an expert advisory panel, through a competitive process that identifies some of the most practical, scalable and replicable examples of what people, businesses, governments and industries are doing to tackle climate change.



Click [here](#) to learn more about the record-breaking number of eligible climate action projects in 2018

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

These are the kind of awards Travel & Tourism needs more of as against those hackneyed and “Best Hotel” or “Best Airline” awards. At the same time, enlightened entrepreneurs should be seeking more opportunities to apply for such global recognition. Will certainly be a great attention-grabber.



SDG 13:

**A dangerously hot
climate, simmering
political tensions:
'This is not the
summer of our
youth'**



Refugees from Somalia arrive at the Burumino refugee camp in Ethiopia. Due to poor rainfall, and continued insecurity in Somalia, the number of refugees at the camp increased. © UNICEF/Jiro Ose



SDG 13: A dangerously hot climate, simmering political tensions: ‘This is not the summer of our youth’

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 1 August 2019 - Global warming and rising political tensions are dangerous and avoidable, Secretary-General António Guterres told reporters, previewing the UN’s upcoming [Climate Action Summit](#), and spotlighting geopolitical hotspots.

Briefing the press at UN Headquarters in New York, Mr. Guterres noted that, while there have always been hot summers, this is “[not the summer of our youth](#)”, but a climate emergency.

Indeed, the UN World Meteorological Organization ([WMO](#)) shows that 2019 had [the hottest June ever](#), with records broken from New Delhi to the Arctic Circle.

July is also on course to equal, or surpass the hottest month in recorded history, and 2015 to 2019 are likely to be the five hottest years on record.

“If we do not take action on climate change now”, said Mr. Guterres, “these extreme weather events are just the tip of the iceberg. And that iceberg is also rapidly melting.”

UN Climate Summit: ‘ticket to entry is bold action’

Turning to the Climate Action Summit, slated for 23 September in New York, the UN chief said that the ticket to entry – for governments, business and civil society – is “bold action and much greater ambition”.

This will be needed if the world is to limit temperature increases to 1.5C and avoid the worst impacts of climate change, by cutting 45 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

“Beautiful speeches”, he continued, are therefore not enough: leaders need to come to New York on September 23 with concrete plans to reach these goals. Mr Guterres said that many solutions are available and are already being implemented.

These include the growing use of technology that is rendering renewable energy cheaper than fossil fuels; the planting of millions of trees to reverse deforestation, and remove carbon dioxide from the environment, the finance world increasingly pricing carbon risks into their decision-making process and calling on leaders to phase out fossil fuel subsidies; and leading businesses are recognizing that, in order to avoid huge losses, now is the time to move from the “grey”, polluting economy, to the green economy.

“We need rapid and deep change in how we do business, generate power, build cities and feed the world.”

Political heat also rising

Mr. Guterres also turned his attention to tensions in global politics, notably in the Persian Gulf, friction between China and the US, and between nuclear-armed states. A minor miscalculation in the Persian Gulf, he said, could lead to a major confrontation.

Referring to recent incidents in the Strait of Hormuz – which include the diversion of a British-flagged oil tanker by Iran, the US destruction of an Iranian drone, and the UK decision to provide a naval escort for tankers – the UN chief stressed the need to respect the rights and duties related to navigation through the Strait, and its adjacent waters, in accordance with international law.

Concerning China-US relations, Mr. Guterres said that the lessons of the Cold War must be learned, in order to avoid a new one, in which two competing blocs emerge, each with their own dominant currency, trade rules, and contradictory geopolitical and military rules.

“With leadership committed to strategic cooperation and to managing competing interests”, he said, “we can steer the world onto a safer path”.

The imminent end of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty – described by the Secretary-General as a “landmark agreement that helped stabilize Europe and end the Cold War”, means that the world will lose an “invaluable brake” on nuclear war.

States with nuclear arms capacity should, he continued, avoid destabilizing developments, and urgently seek a new path towards new international arms control measures. These include an extension of the so-called “New Start” agreement between the US and Russia; the 2020 Review of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Both climate change and simmering political tensions comprise what I have termed [The Two Global Warmings](#). As usual, the Travel & Tourism industry prefers to operate within the comfort zone of one global warming while ignoring the other. Either way, it will pay the price of living in denial.



SDG 13:

**UN Youth envoy
launches coding
competition to help
solve climate crisis
and 'Reboot the
Earth'**



*Young people using computers in Kampala, Uganda.
World Bank/Arne Hoel*



SDG 13: UN Youth envoy launches coding competition to help solve climate crisis and ‘Reboot the Earth’

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 22 July 2019 - Can young coders help solve the climate crisis? The UN's Youth Envoy launched a global competition earlier this month, “[Reboot The Earth](#)”, with support from the UN Office of Information & Communications Technology, Deloitte and SAP, to try and answer that question, fostering collaboration between the United Nations, academia, civil society, and young people to address the climate emergency.

[Jayathma Wickramanayake](#)'s office describes the competition as a “global hackathon”, where teams of computer programmers, scientists and others, will try to solve a local climate crisis, that may be unique to each location in line with specific community needs, by creating new software, or improving upon existing programs.

The hackathon will take place at United Nations [Technology Innovation Labs](#) in five different countries (Malaysia, Finland, India, Egypt and Germany), during August. Through a series of Tech Challenges, one team from each country will be selected to travel to New York City to attend a “Reboot The Earth” awards ceremony, during the UN [Climate Summit](#) on September 21.

The winner from each country will get the chance to have their solution showcased at the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, in January 2020, and the overall winner has the opportunity of seeing their software proposal developed at one of the UN Technology Innovation Labs.

You can find more details of the competition, and how to enter, [here](#).

In an interview with UN News, Ms. Wickramanayake said that young people are key to solving global climate challenges, and drivers of change and innovation: “With the global climate movement led by young people, the United Nations supports youth's effort in driving climate action”, said the Sri Lankan-born envoy.

Since the launch of the [Youth 2030](#) Strategy, the United Nations has been scaling up global, regional and national actions to meet young people's needs, realize their rights and tap their possibilities as agents of change.

As the Youth Envoy explains, Reboot The Earth is about creating a platform for young people to share their best innovative ideas and solutions

with the United Nations, making them equal partners in the global fight against the climate crisis:

“Reboot The Earth presents young people with the opportunity to not only showcase their potential and ideas, but also to be recognized at the United Nations Climate Summit in September 2019”

“We’re calling the winners of this year’s hackathon ‘The #ClimateReboot Troops’, and they will have be able to collaborate with the United Nations on a long-term project, to work on, and scale up, solutions that will have a real-life impact in communities.”

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Rebooting The Earth opens an opportunity to Reboot Travel & Tourism across the board. Such a Reboot is long overdue to revamp the founding principles of the industry. Clearly, the drivers of growth are no longer valid in an era when managing the growth has become far more important.



SDG 14:

The Future of the Fishing Industry



GLOBAL FISHERY FORUM & SEAFOOD EXPO RUSSIA 2019



SDG 14: The Future of the Fishing Industry

Nature, the Economy and People Identified as Three Pillars of Global Environmental Management at the Plenary Session of Global Fishing Forum 2019

The III Global Fishery Forum and International Exhibition of Fish Industry, Seafood and Technology (Seafood Expo Russia) was held from 10 to 12 July 2019 in St. Petersburg, at the ExpoForum Convention and Exhibition Centre. The organizer is the Federal Agency for Fisheries and the Forum's operator is the Roscongress Foundation. The business programme was launched by the plenary session "Ocean of Opportunities: Nature, Economy and People."

Dmitry Patrushev, Minister of Agriculture of the Russian Federation, welcomed the participants and congratulated them on the start of the Forum, pointing to the global importance of the issues the Forum is to address.

"The Global Fishery Forum is unique as it places equal emphasis on the scientific, economic, legal and social aspects of use of aquatic biological resources and development of fisheries," Dmitry Patrushev stressed. "Today we are facing new challenges and even the world's biggest powers are unable to cope with them on their own," he added.

The most important areas of international cooperation in the fishing industry, he believes, are the search for new reserves of raw materials in the oceans, better legal regulation of fisheries activities at the national and international levels, and collaboration in the fight against IUU fishing.

Last year, Russian fishermen set a record for the last 25 years, capturing more than 5 million tonnes. Yet Russia still has major reserves available for development of both fisheries and aquaculture, the Minister emphasized. For these purposes, the government allocates significant amounts out of the federal budget. So, in 2018, the financing amounted to RUB 12.3 billion and it is expected to be RUB 2 billion more in 2019. As a result of implementing the Strategy for Development of the Fisheries Complex in Russia, the industry's contribution to GDP should reach RUB 600 billion.

For his part, Ilya Shestakov, Deputy Minister of Agriculture of the Russian Federation and Head of the Federal Agency for Fisheries, spoke in detail about the role interstate cooperation may play in the

development of world fisheries, including at the Forum.

“Last year, we discussed the world fishery prospects up to 2050 and realized that, despite the global challenges, including the rapid growth of the Earth’s population, global warming and the crisis in the management of the world fisheries, we have real prospects not only for maintaining the current catch level but also increasing it many times over without compromising the sustainability of marine ecosystems,” Ilya Shestakov said.



The Forum’s theme this year – “Ocean of Opportunities: Nature, Economy and People” – is about finding a balance between the three main aspects of environmental management: natural, social and economic. This requires new approaches to managing the world’s fish resources, the Head of the Federal Agency for Fisheries noted.

Thanks to scientific research, new strategic reserves of raw materials for fisheries in the World Ocean, such as mesopelagic fish, Antarctic krill, deep-sea fish and invertebrates, have already been identified, Ilya Shestakov pointed out. According to expert estimates, their inclusion in fishery will increase the value of the world catch of

bioresources up to 200–250 million tonnes a year, which exceeds the current annual catch by all countries almost 2.5 times over.

He also elaborated on the Russian government’s ideas about mechanisms for developing the industry. “Orientating producers on increasingly deep processing of products, both for export and for domestic consumers, can be seen as a strategic priority,” Ilya Shestakov stated. “This is being encouraged at the government level, including through investment quotas. New state-of-the-art trawler-processors and processing plants will make it possible to move to manufacture of products with a high added value in the near future. By increasing the share of such products, we will increase our contribution to Russia’s GDP to USD 10 billion. At the same time, a new programme for upgrading the production base will improve working conditions for fishermen and their safety,” he said.

At the same time, he noted that development of the fishing industry should be in harmony with social, economic and environmental factors, avoiding both excessive fishing pressure and sudden, emotional, scientifically unsound decisions to ban extraction of aquatic biological resources in certain areas.

“It is essential to maintain an optimal balance between these areas. Then we will get a multiplier effect in the fishing industry, in the economy and in the social sphere,” Ilya Shestakov concluded.

Marcio Castro de Souza, Senior Fishery Officer at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), spoke about the FAO GLOBEFISH project for collecting and disseminating information on the situation on fish markets. He said the mission of the project was to help countries make effective use of their natural and productive resources for developing the fisheries sector. “The unified database includes data on catch, production volumes and trends, exports and imports by different countries, fish production costs, the market situation and other information required for effective commercial management and international regulation of the fisheries sector,” the FAO official reported.



Suam Kim, President of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC), presented a detailed report on use of salmon resources, covering the history of fishing, the general state of stocks in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, the volume and social impact of their use, and fishing problems that have emerged in recent years. These included the risk of overfishing in certain areas, climate change, parasite infestation and some environmental aspects of pasture cultivation. The main role in solving these problems is played by scientific research, the scientist stressed. “Russia proposed that NPAFC should conduct winter and summer surveys of the entire North Pacific Ocean in 2021. We will draw the world’s attention with this bold proposal, which would allow us to fill the widest gap in our understanding of the biology and ecology of Pacific salmon – distribution in the high seas in winter and the factors affecting survival,” Suam Kim said.

Turkish Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Bekir Pakdemirli shared his country’s experience in regulating the fishing industry and managing aquatic bioresources. So, Turkey has managed to involve private farms actively in restoring previously undermined aquatic bioresources through state support mechanisms, according to the Minister. The export of Turkish fish products will reach USD 2 billion this year, while the culture of fish consumption remains high in the country, he stressed.

For their part, the Governor of the Kamchatka Territory Vladimir Ilyukhin and the Governor of the Arkhangelsk Region Igor Orlov focused on the fishing industry’s achievements in the regions, the potential for socio-economic development of the territories as part of fishery clusters, new opportunities associated with use of the Northern Sea Route, and priority areas in developing the regional fishery complex.

Going Digital: New Opportunities and IT Solutions for the Fishing Industry were Discussed at the Global Fishery Forum 2019



Introduction of digital technologies in the fishing industry was discussed at the roundtable “Digitalization as a Tool for the Transformation of the Fisheries Industry”. New opportunities for fishermen will not only save them from needing to store and keep paper documents onboard a vessel but will also help in efficient and careful performance of fishing, transfer of catch for processing, and ensuring safety: these opportunities are an online fishing log, satellite monitoring,

an international electronic reporting system, use of Big Data and other advanced IT solutions and electronic services.

According to Artem Vilkin, Head of the Centre of Fishery Monitoring and Communications (CFMC), the task is “to provide the fishing community with business solutions that will help everyone engage in trade and exchange information.”

The Head of the CFMC presented a video on the history of development of the Industry Monitoring System, which marks its 20th anniversary this year, since its inception. Artem Vilkin talked about plans to develop the IMS in the coming years.

The CFMC offers a number of new or improved services. In the next year or two, the Centre plans to focus on putting them into commercial operation. Obviously, this concerns an online fishing log, which is already in operation. That way the updated fishing rules for the Far East include a provision allowing fishermen to submit catch data as an electronic document with a digital signature. In future, it is planned to consolidate and regulate the widespread use of online fishing logs with the help of federal law.

“The second significant project is the portal of the Industry Monitoring System (IMS), which includes a number of subsystems and services. The pilot operation of the IMS portal has been extended until the end of November; we need to finalize all the comments and proposals we collect from fishing participants, as well as to consolidate use of the IMS portal with regulatory documents. The CFMC is also conducting a number of other projects, which together will save fishermen from having to keep onboard paper documents,” Artem Vilkin reported.

Dmitry Bakanov, General Director of the Gonets Satellite System, shared his experience of using the national satellite system Gonets in fishing. It includes 12 Gonets-M spacecraft and three ground stations in Russia. The system transmits data from ships to the CFMC. Shipboard stations have been used on fishing vessels and sailing vessels of the Russian Federal Agency for Fisheries since 2015, according to Dmitry Bakanov.

“The Gonets system helps monitor and control extraction of aquatic bioresources and ensure transfer of data in compliance with national legislation,” he added.

Maxim Buzmakov, Director for Development of Trading Technologies Group, spoke about an online trading platform for selling aquatic biological resources and related products. Thus, the FishFrom.Net service unites more than 2,000 vessels and 50 sellers, and the website is linked to Chinese e-commerce platforms. The speaker demonstrated the mechanism for trading on the website by logging into the fisherman’s personal web office, where the data are synchronized with the online fishing log. According to Buzmakov, India will be the next country after China, which opens up export opportunities for Russian fishermen.



The roundtable was also attended by foreign experts.

Thord Munsen, representative of Norway, reported on the history of introducing the Norwegian online fisheries log, which was launched in 2005.

“When fish enter Norway, this is registered in online logs. When reporting on the catch, we indicate the place of the catch and its volume; each vessel reports on the catch at entry and exit. It is important to work within a single harmonized system with other countries,” he stressed. Electronic document management is set to develop but it is worth making more use of artificial intelligence and machine vision to digitize the fishing industry fully, Munsen believes.

Aslaug Eir Holmgeirsdottir, Head of Supervision of the Icelandic Coast Guard, elaborated on Iceland’s experience of fisheries digitalization. The country has a standard electronic system that collects data, consolidates sales and processing reports.

“The core of our work is real-time, catch-based management: all ports are connected to the system. The information is immediately uploaded on to the Internet and is updated every six hours, with open access,” she explained.

For his part, Robert Focke, Managing Director of BAADER (Germany), underlined that the possibility of tracing the entire production chain would help boost confidence in products. His company supplies plant for salmon production. “The future is electronic data transmission and digitalization,” he believes.

The Korean aquatic fishery monitoring system is another example of using advanced technology in the fishing industry. It was described by Jongil Jung, Assistant Director of the Fisheries Monitoring Centre, Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea. The country applies state-of-the-art technology and satellite communications to reduce IUU fishing effectively. Round-the-clock monitoring is carried out on 220 vessels, each vessel producing at least ten reports and most of the processes being automated. The system monitors the vessel’s activity, route and position online, and the inspector-controller can see the data update every five minutes.



The participants in the roundtable concluded that digitalization was inevitable for ensuring further effective functioning of the industry amid the accelerating globalization.

III Global Fishery Forum looks at social aspects of fisheries in light of territorial development

The roundtable “Fisheries: Social Dimension as a Factor for the Development of Territories” was held as part of the Global Fishery Forum on 11 July. Participants exchanged experience and identified key growth points for coastal areas.

Russia’s maritime border is currently 37,000 km long, covering 12 constituent entities of the Russian Federation and including 80 population centres with a total population of 100,000. These are mainly remote areas with a poorly developed infrastructure. According to session moderator Sergei Mitin, First Deputy Chair of the Federation Council Committee on Agriculture and Food Policy and Environmental Management, social conditions in such places do not always meet modern requirements.

Development of the territories is facilitated by federal laws and local programmes. One of the main documents in this respect will be the state programme for development of rural areas, which was adopted by the Government of the Russian Federation a few days ago.

“The programme envisages significant changes in rural areas to ensure that social conditions there are normalized. It also provides for a number of departmental projects, including development of housing construction, development and improvement of territories, promotion of employment, development of the engineering and transport infrastructure. The state programme also features a departmental programme ‘Modern appearance of rural areas’. In addition to the Ministry of Agriculture and the Federal Agency for Fisheries, the ministries for culture and transport, big state enterprises and other institutions will also take part in this programme. It is important that everything works smoothly and clearly”, the speaker emphasized.



Foreign participants in the roundtable spoke about territorial development practices in their own countries. Hiroya Ebina, Mayor of Japan's Kushiro, talked about the role of fishing in the city's economic development. The economy of Kushiro, located in northern Japan on Hokkaido Island, was previously based on the coal industry. Owing to changes in energy policy, this sphere has shrunk considerably and today Kushiro has the only coal mine in Japan. Since the 1960s, the city has been building industrial fish processing facilities and a special zone with production and factories has been established. Kushiro also actively draws foreign tourists to fishing development.

“Nature allows us to attract tourists. Foreigners love robata, Japan's traditional method of cooking when fresh seafood is roasted on the fire right on the shore. Our fish market unites 50 companies. Foreign tourists have helped us achieve significant progress in fishing”, the Japanese delegate said, adding that Kushiro has a population of 170,000.

Berglind Asgeirsdottir, Ambassador of the Republic of Iceland to the Russian Federation, described the impact of Iceland's advanced fisheries industry on the national economy. In 1984, the Icelandic authorities received a report on a reduction of fish stocks. The government responded by introducing a system of individual, transferrable quotas. Quotas have been granted to those who have vessels and have been fishing for at least three years. Most of the quotas have passed from one company to another and the initiative has had both a considerable economic effect and a positive impact on the environment.

“We have fewer ships and ship owners and people's interest has increased. Many began to sell ships to those who are more efficient. We are getting more value from every kilo”, Asgeirsdottir explained.

Not only fish fillets but also by-products are used in Iceland today. So, they go into production of small wares, cosmetics and medicines. The share of fish fillets does not exceed 44–45%. Iceland uses 75% of each fish caught and 99% of the catch is exported.

“We have imposed strict fines on offenders: for example, in Iceland, fish cannot be thrown away. Since the resource is limited, it should be treated with caution and care”, the expert said.



With regard to social aspects, there are still difficulties with quotas for small vessels and community quotas. Residents of regions dependent on fishing and fish processing continue to discuss whether the quota system is fair. In 2012, the country introduced a tax on natural resources, which the authorities see as the only way to reconcile people.

Pyotr Dzhunkovsky, Vice-Chairman of the Board of the Union of Fishing Collective Farms of Russia, focused on the history of the fishing industry. He said fish cooperatives in Russia were more than 200 years old. In May, the flagship of the entire system of cooperatives – the Lenin collective farm in Kamchatka – turned 90. Dzhunkovsky added that the Union had 60 fishing farms in 10 constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

“Fishing cooperatives and associations, members of our Union, are coastal fishermen who make a significant contribution to Russia’s food security. It is important for us

to preserve the historical principle of quota distribution. Russia is a maritime country; its potential has been shaped by history and aquatic bioresources. We have hundreds of villages and single-industry towns. We have to realize the advantages of the marine economy, to improve social and economic conditions for the population, and bring the legal framework up to the standards of international law”, the speaker insisted. He believes it is necessary to develop coastal territories, promote the fishing industry, including through legislative support, and protect sea workers and their families.

Sergey Tarusov, Chairman of the Lenin Fishing Collective Farm, talked about the special features of major fishing enterprises in single-industry towns.

“The mechanism of investment quotas stimulated renewal of the material and technical base. Forty modern vessels are being built, which will set an example for world fishery; fish processing complexes and factories are being created. We ourselves actively participate in the investment quota programme, by building three vessels and two processing plants”, he said. According to Tarusov, the work of ships should be harmonized with the activities of coastal factories: new technologies solve the problem of delivering raw material in good quality.

“It is the onshore plants that will make big profits in raw material processing. The most important thing is to create a deep processing product. The face of our industry will change dramatically in 3–5 years”, he concluded.

Another aspect of fisheries development is social and labour relations in the industry. Alexey Buglak, President of the Russian Pollock Catchers Association, recalled the events of 2014–2015, when articles appeared in the press about child labour being used in Thailand’s fishing companies. According to the speaker, the reputation of the major brands has been threatened.

The Russian Pollock Catchers Association prepared a report on the state of social and labour relations in Russia.

“The market is beginning to demand independent confirmation of employees’ rights. New specialized standards are being developed and all exporters are likely to undergo certification. This will be an additional incentive to companies to be attentive to observance of workers’ rights and will increase the

social responsibility of business”, he added.

Alesya Ratashnyuk, Executive Director of the Pollock Catchers Association, turned to the regulation of social and labour relations in fisheries. According to the International Labor Organization, 38 million people are employed in world fishery today. In Russia, it is 50,000 workers, more than half of them in the Far East. Fishing remains one of the most risky professions in the world, while the industry ranks third in Russia in terms of wages after the oil and gas and financial sectors. The average salary in the Russian fishing industry today is RUB 74,000, having risen by a factor of 26 over the last 19 years.

On the whole, she believes, Russia enjoys a strong legal framework for regulating relations in line with international standards, and a developed social partnership.

Miron Borgulev, Director of the Sustainable Marine Fishery Programme at WWF Russia, made a presentation “Spawning protection forest belts: balancing fishing and forest management interests”. “We need to participate more actively in establishing new fishery protected areas. So that one resource does not kill another”, said Borgulev.

Petr Savchuk, Deputy Head of the Federal Agency for Fisheries, took the floor at the end of the roundtable. In his opinion, social issues are multifaceted and there are also regional specifics.

“This topic will be discussed more than once. Investments in the industry are growing but we need to think about people as well. We need to carry out inspections and understand how the issue is being addressed in each region”, he said.

Fishing in the Harshest Parts of the World: Tomorrow’s Reality

The roundtable “The Arctic and the Antarctic: Resource Potential, Ban or Fishing, Elements of Cooperation” was held as part of the III Global Fishery Forum. Scientists and experts discussed cooperation and development of approaches to managing aquatic bioresources within the framework of international agreements and regional fisheries management organizations in Arctic and Antarctic waters.

The moderator of the roundtable was Kirill Kolonchin, Director of the Russian Federal Research Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography (VNIRO). In his opening remarks, he reminded the participants about the government’s interest in exploring opportunities for developing Arctic and Antarctic resources and outlined the key national policies in this area. He stressed that there was much in common between the processes taking place in the Arctic and the Antarctic at first glance and that interest in them is developing in both directions.



Konstantin Bandurin, Director of the Atlantic Branch of VNIRO, spoke about the prospects for and problems of aquatic bioresource production in the Antarctic and commented on development of resource studies. He said krill was the main fishing target in these waters. The total biomass of this species amounts to 60.3 million tonnes, with a total allowable catch of 5.6 million tonnes. “From the mid-80s, the domestic annual catch was up to 300,000–360,000 tonnes of krill. And after Russian vessels withdrew from the fishery, the global krill catch, up to 2006, was 90,000 to 120,000 tonnes,” Bandurin said.

A special research programme was developed to boost Russian catch volumes, including of Antarctic krill. At the same time, among the most pressing challenges recently have been attempts to include unreasonably some parts of the sea areas in the protected zones. On the pretext of protection against climate change and anthropogenic impact, some countries propose including sites with commercial krill accumulation in zones where extraction is prohibited. Such sites make up 20% of the total area covered by the CCAMLR Convention, and no major studies have been conducted to date to confirm these threats to ecosystems, according to Bandurin.

For his part, Vladimir Belyayev, Head of the VNIRO Centre for International Fisheries Cooperation, focused on international cooperation in the Arctic. “Norway is an important strategic partner of Russia in the north-western part of the Arctic, and the Russian-Norwegian commission has been working fruitfully for many years now, addressing joint development of cod, capelin, haddock, Arctic cod and seals,” Belyayev said.

In the east of the region, the Russia-USA Intergovernmental Consultative Committee (ICC) is an important body and, in recent years, there has been an active exchange of information on the Chukchee Sea.

Another major achievement is conclusion of an agreement to combat unregulated fishing in the central Arctic Ocean. As the reserves are formed within the 200-mile economic zones of the states, we should realize that the national rules of fisheries management should be primarily taken into account in managing aquatic bioresources, Belyayev reckons.

Alexey Baitalyuk, Head of the Pacific Branch of the VNIRO, spoke about Russian studies on the eastern part of the Arctic, which have been carried out in the past years and are to be completed in the coming months.

He said changes in ice boundaries in the Arctic had not ceased and had not even slowed down, with the ice area shrinking rapidly in the summer months. So, fishery research in the Arctic Ocean is becoming increasingly important.

“The Laptev Sea is the best studied water area in the eastern Arctic, thanks to research in industrial and fundamental science. The results of these studies help us judge the presence of commercial aggregations of Arctic cod there. No other commercial aggregations have been found previously but benthic studies have shown that this region is close to the north of the Bering Sea in terms of density of

bottom communities, which is far certainly not an unproductive region,” Baitalyuk stressed.

During a large-scale transarctic voyage beginning in August, researchers will conduct a range of studies, including trawl, ichthyoplankton, hydrochemical, acoustic, benthic research in the Chukchee, East Siberian, Laptev, Kara and Barents Seas. For the first time, science will gain a systematic insight into the reserves of aquatic bioresources and their habitats.



Of great interest to researchers are the resources of crabs, pollock and Arctic cod in the Chukchee Sea, which is a point of entry of water into the Arctic and of migration of aquatic bioresources, which makes it a suitable reference area for research, according to Baitalyuk.

Oleg Bulatov, Research Director at VNIRO, reported on the improvement in cod stock management and the need for new approaches to determining the total allowable catches. He said cod biomass in the Barents Sea had been at its all-time high in recent years but the fishing industry was far from its maximum potential.

This is due to the outdated methods used by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) to determine total allowable catches (TACs). The forecasting models developed by VNIRO take into account the young yielding generations when calculating the TAC. However, the new approaches cannot be considered and adopted by the special working group on ICES methodology before 2021. “Such red tape at the ICES is a serious challenge to developing rational Arctic environmental management and leads to financial losses in the industry,” Bulatov warned.

The roundtable also considered new prospects for the application of krill, advanced hydrological processes in the Arctic and the Antarctic and methods for studying them, as well as the possibilities for improving the fisheries of aquatic bioresources in the northern regions.

A Fresh Look at Fish Industry Development: Young Scholars Present Their Solutions at Global Fishery Forum 2019



New scientific ideas and achievements, as well as innovative proposals that could ensure progress in Russia’s fisheries sector were considered at the panel session “New Faces of Fisheries Science. New Ideas. New Solutions”, held as part of the III Global Fishery Forum. Young scholars and specialists from the research institutions of the Federal Agency for Fisheries reported on their research and shared their ideas on how to boost the industry’s efficiency.

Mikhail Glubokovsky, Scientific Director of the Russian Federal Research Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography, said in his opening remarks that hopes were traditionally pinned on young specialists to secure a scientific breakthrough in the industry. “The standard of our young scientists is high enough to make an innovative breakthrough in the Russian fishery with the help of their mentors and experienced employees,” he believes.

Leonid Arkhipov, a researcher at the Russian Federal Research Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography (VNIRO), made a presentation on the prospects for using subcooling technology for commercial fish species. He stressed that this method helped avoid the typical freezing damage to products. “At the same time, the quality of the products is comparable with that of chilled raw materials, growth of microflora slows down, the shelf life of foodstuffs increases, the technological properties of the raw materials are preserved, and it is less energy-consuming than freezing,” Leonid Arkhipov said, describing the advantages of the method.

The main problem in rolling out this technology is the need to provide a number of special conditions for stabilizing the state of product subcooling: individual cooling temperature regimes, isolation from ingress of seed crystals on to the product surface, protection from mechanical damage, stability of

storage temperatures with a narrow range of deviations throughout the refrigeration chain – from production to implementation. In Russia, this technology is not yet widespread but the research conducted by VNIRO has produced good results: using this method, the shelf life of fish products has increased from 12 to 28 days without loss of quality.

The scholars also highlighted the possibilities for using remote real-time monitoring of salmon migration



to spawning grounds, methods for genetic differentiation of sterlet populations for better management of their stocks and creation of a special mobile application for amateur fishermen to help them follow the fishing rules in their region.

Taking Stock of the III Global Fishery Forum



12 July saw the conclusion of the III Global Fishery Forum and the Exhibition of Fish Industry, Seafood and Technology in St. Petersburg. The event brought together leading members of the business and academic community, representatives of fisheries and heads of sectoral agencies, enterprises from related sectors, heads of ministries and agencies, and representatives of public associations from 38 countries and 30 Russian regions.

GFF 2019 has confirmed its status of the year's main sectoral event and demonstrated that such a communication platform is in high demand with Russian and foreign experts. The organizer of the Forum was the Federal Agency for Fisheries; the Roscongress Foundation was the Forum's operator, while ExpoSolutions Group was the operator of Seafood Expo.

A total of nearly 6,000 people attended the GFF. It was visited by 20 representative foreign delegations from Turkey, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Namibia, the Republic of Korea, Japan, Iceland, the Republic of Guinea, Sri Lanka, and other countries, and by heads of major international fishery organizations. The event was covered by approximately 250 Russian and foreign journalists from Russia, Malaysia, the UK, France and Japan.

The dignitaries attending the Forum included Bekir Pakdemirli, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Republic of Turkey; Frédéric Loua, Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture and Marine Economy, Republic of Guinea; Has Saret, State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Kingdom of Cambodia; Ashraf Ali Khan Khasru, Minister of Fisheries and Livestock, People's Republic of Bangladesh; Amiran Kakalia, Minister of Agriculture, Republic of Abkhazia; Choi Joon-Uk, Deputy Minister for Maritime Policies of the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, Republic of Korea; Atanas Dobrev, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, Republic of Bulgaria.

"Today, Russia is focusing particularly on developing the fishery complex. State support is increasing by the year. For instance, RUB 12.3 bn was channelled into the 'Developing the Fishery Complex' state

programme in 2018. In 2019, it was RUB 2 bn more. The state support is one of the factors allowing the sector to demonstrate sustainable, positive dynamics for several years running”, said Dmitry Patrushev, Minister of Agriculture of the Russian Federation.

A meeting was held on the sidelines of the Forum between Ilya Shestakov, Head of Rosrybolovstvo, and Choi Joon-Uk, Deputy Minister for Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea. The parties discussed holding the 29th Session of the Russia-Korea Fishery Commission and the preliminary agenda for the next meeting. Additionally, the Head of the Federal Agency for Fisheries held meetings with the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Abkhazia, the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Food and Forestry of the Republic of Bulgaria, and the delegations of the Republic of Bangladesh and the Republic of Guinea.

The Forum’s business programme included a plenary session, thematic conferences, and roundtables at which the delegates discussed key fishery industry issues.

The “Ocean of opportunities: Nature, economy and people” Plenary Session was the main event of the Forum’s business program on its first day. The session was attended by Dmitry Patrushev, Minister of Agriculture of the Russian Federation; Ilya Shestakov, Deputy Minister of Agriculture of the Russian Federation, Head of the Federal Agency for Fisheries; Marcio Castro de Souza, Senior Fishery Officer at FAO; Suam Kim, President of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC); Jacques Verborgh, President of the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC); Bekir Pakdemirli, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Turkey; Vladimir Ilyukhin, Governor of the Kamchatka Territory; Igor Orlov, Governor of the Arkhangelsk Region; and Vladimir Sitnov, Senior Vice President, Corporate and Investment Business Block at PJSC Sberbank.



The attendants discussed economic efficiency and social stability, regulating fishing and competition, the sector’s legal framework and the balance between public and private interests.

Sectoral experts and members of official delegations spoke at the panel sessions: “Digitalization as a Tool for the Transformation of the Fisheries Industry”, “How to sell fish properly”, “The Arctic and Antarctica: Resource Potential, Ban, or Fishing, Elements of Cooperation”, “New faces of fisheries science. New

ideas. New solutions”, “Unlocking the Potential of Aquaculture in Russia and the World: Management, Resources, Markets”, “The cost of the fish industry: how to evaluate the efficiency of business use of a nationwide resource?”, “Fish Market Economics: Fishing, Processing, Logistics, and Retail”, and “Fisheries: The Social Dimension as a Factor for the Development of Territories.”

In addition to Russian and foreign representatives of the fishing industry, the Global Fishery Forum was attended by scientists, specialists from public organizations and state sectoral agencies.

The III International Exhibition of Fish Industry, Seafood and Technology (Seafood Expo Russia) demonstrated the full fishery complex cycle: fishing and processing companies, manufacturers of equipment, shipbuilding companies, plants, commercial and government organizations, and professional associations. The Expo introduces its visitors to the work of Russian and foreign fish industry leaders; here, one can taste their products and go through a multimedia interactive tunnel.

The Expo pavilion’s area exceeded 13,000 square metres. The number of participating companies reached 335, which is 34% more than last year. Of these, 184 are Russian companies and 151 are foreign ones. The Expo featured seven joint national booths from Norway, Iceland, Denmark, Morocco, Turkey, China,

Spain, and 12 joint regional booths from the Arkhangelsk, Astrakhan, Kaliningrad, Rostov, Leningrad, Ulyanovsk, Murmansk, and Magadan regions, the Republics of Karelia and Tatarstan, the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District, and the Primorye Territory.

The Expo featured a Retail Centre business zone where manufacturers and representatives of major chains held talks on direct deliveries of fish and seafood. Major retail chains, such as X5 Retail Group (Pyatyorochka, Perekrestok, Karusel), Auchan, Lenta, Magnit, Azbuka Vkusa, and big regional chains are present in the Business Zone. Over the two days of the Exhibition, 15 fishing companies held over a 100 meetings here. Additionally, the Expo held Aquaculture Day on 11 July.

On 10 July, at the Pella Leningrad Shipbuilding Facility, a ceremony was held to launch the Scorpio freezer trawler for a Murmansk fishing company. The event was attended by Dmitry Patrushev, Minister of Agriculture of the Russian Federation; Ilya Shestakov, Deputy Minister of Agriculture of the Russian Federation, Head of the Federal Agency for Fisheries; Gerbert Tsaturov, Pella OJSC General Director; and Yuri Parshev, Executive Director of FEST Company Group. The building of the vessel at the Russian shipbuilding yard was made possible by investment quotas, a state support mechanism.

On the same day, five important agreements were signed at the exhibition. The Government of the Arkhangelsk Region concluded agreements with the Government of the Kamchatka Territory, with the Northern (Arctic) Federal University, and the Arctic Fishing Cluster Association. In turn, the Northern University signed an agreement with the Russian Research Institute of Fisheries and Oceanography. The Arctic Fishing Cluster Association and the Federal State Unitary Enterprise National Fish Resources (FSUE NATSRYBRESURS) signed a document on participation in the industrial activities of the Arctic Fishing Cluster.

On 11 July, The Federal Agency for Fisheries and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of the Kingdom of Cambodia signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in fisheries and aquaculture. The document was signed by Ilya Shestakov, Deputy Minister of Agriculture of the Russian Federation and Head of the Federal Agency for Fisheries, and Eng Chea San, delegate from the Royal Government of Cambodia, General Director of the Fisheries Administration. The parties are interested in cooperating closely in scientific research to develop measures for conserving living marine resources and making rational use of them.

On 11 July, the Chief Basin Office for Fisheries and Preservation of Aquatic Biological Resources (FSBE Glavrybvod) and Rosrybolovstvo named the winners of the FishCorr all-Russia journalistic competition. The panel of judges honoured Russia's best journalists, periodicals, news outlets and TV channels releasing articles, reports and films about restoring aquatic bioresources, solving environmental problems and conserving river potential.

Ahead of Fisherman's Day, the Head of Rosrybolovstvo presented awards to veterans of the fishery sector and the best employees of Russia's fishery complex.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Tourist consumption of seafood is one of the biggest contributors to jobs and income in the global fishery sector. But it is also responsible for over-consumption. This series of items shows the incredibly complexity of the seafood chain. Fishermen and farmers are both agriculturalists in different forms. They face similar challenges and their fate is inextricably linked to the fate of Travel & Tourism.



SDG 16:

**‘Cataclysmic events’
in Hiroshima,
Nagasaki, began
‘global push’ against
nuclear weapons**



Injured civilians, having escaped the raging inferno, gathered on a pavement west of Miyuki-bashi in Hiroshima, Japan, about 11 a.m. on 6 August 1945. UN Photo/Yoshito Matsushige



SDG 16: 'Cataclysmic events' in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, began 'global push' against nuclear weapons

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 6 August 2019 - Paying homage to those who perished as the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, as well as the many others whose lives were devastated in the years that followed, UN chief António Guterres on Tuesday underscored their "courage and moral leadership" in reminding the world of "the human cost of nuclear war".

"The reaction to the cataclysmic events of 6 August 1945 was also the beginning of a global push to ensure that nuclear weapons are never used again", Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, said on behalf of the UN Secretary-General, speaking at the Hiroshima Annual Peace Ceremony.

The people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, led by the survivors, called hibakusha in Japanese, have been at the forefront.

"The world is indebted to them for their courage and moral leadership in reminding us all about the human cost of nuclear war", said Ms. Nakamitsu. "Today, we are sadly witnessing a worsening international security environment".

She elaborated that "tensions between the

nuclear-armed States are rising" and the disarmament and arms-control institutions that have made the world a more secure place for decades, are being "called into question".

Reiterating the core message that the hibakusha have travelled the world to spread over the decades, she underscored that "the only guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons is the total elimination of nuclear weapons".

Ms. Nakamitsu recalled that nuclear disarmament was the subject of the very first General Assembly resolution back in 1946. "This objective underpins the new disarmament agenda that I put forward last year", she stated, renewing her call on world leaders to "intensify our efforts towards that goal".

Marking the 74th anniversary of the first use of a nuclear weapon in war, Ms. Nakamitsu pointed out that nearly 14,000 nuclear warheads exist today, "many still on hair-trigger alert".

"Much work remains to be done to lessen and ultimately remove this peril", she stressed.

In closing, the UN disarmament chief noted that "inspired by the resilient spirit of the people of

Hiroshima”, she is “fully committed to working with the hibakusha and all others to realize our shared goal: A world free of nuclear weapons”.

One little-known fact about when the United States dropped the atomic bombs in 1945 is that 12 American Prisoners of War were being held

close to the centre of the blast in Hiroshima at the time. The film “Paper Lanterns” documents their stories and the extraordinary actions over the years that followed of one local humanitarian to honour their memory. Director Barry Frechette and producer Peter Grilli, recounted the incredible narrative to UN News.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

This editor has visited the museums of both Hiroshima and Nagasaki to pay tribute to the victims of those devastating bombs. Both are well worth seeing, beautifully designed with Virtual Reality effects to show human suffering of the devastation. For those who want to learn more about the misery caused by conflict, there is probably no better place to start.



SDG 16:

Nagasaki is 'a global inspiration' for peace: UN marks anniversary of atomic bombing



Secretary-General
António Guterres
folds origami cranes
with young Japanese
leaders at the Nagasaki
Peace Memorial. UN
Dan Powell



SDG 16: Nagasaki is ‘a global inspiration’ for peace: UN marks anniversary of atomic bombing

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 9 August 2018 - The survivors of the atomic bombings, known in Japanese as the hibakusha, have become global “leaders for peace and disarmament”, [United Nations Secretary-General](#) Antonio Guterres said at Thursday’s Nagasaki Peace Memorial Ceremony in Japan, commemorating the 73rd anniversary of that devastating day.

“Nagasaki is not just an international city with a long and fascinating history. It is a [global inspiration](#) for all those who seek to create a safer and more secure world,” Mr. Guterres said.

“I am humbled”, he told those assembled, “to be here with you to commemorate the women, men and children killed by the nuclear attack on Nagasaki on 9 August 1945,” he said conveying his “deepest respect and condolences to everyone here today, and to all the victims and survivors of the atomic bombs”.

Calling the city “a beacon of hope and strength, and a monument to the resilience of its people,” the UN chief underscored that while the atomic bomb killed and injured tens of thousands, it “could not crush your spirit”.

“From the other side of the apocalypse, the hibakusha have raised their voices on behalf of the entire human family. We must listen,” he asserted. “There can be no more Hiroshimas, no more Nagasakis, and so no more hibakusha.”

Mr. Guterres noted that 73 years on, fear of nuclear war still prevails, as States are spending vast sums to modernize their nuclear weapon arsenals.

“More than \$1.7 trillion was spent in 2017 on arms and armies — the highest level since the end of the cold war and around 80 times the amount needed for global humanitarian aid,” the Secretary-General pointed out.

Disarmament lag

Meanwhile, disarmament processes have slowed and even come to a halt.

“Many States demonstrated their frustration by adopting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons last year,” said Mr. Guterres.

Other deadly weapons also threaten incessant peril, such as chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, and those developed for cyberwarfare.

Moreover, conflicts fought with conventional weapons are lasting longer and are becoming more deadly for civilians, he added.

“There is an urgent need for disarmament of all kinds, but especially nuclear disarmament,” the UN chief maintained, citing this as the backdrop of his global disarmament initiative launched in May.

Mr. Guterres labelled disarmament “a driving force for maintaining international peace and security”, calling it a tool for ensuring national security.

“It helps to uphold the principles of humanity, promote sustainable development and protect civilians,” he spelled out.

He turned to his [disarmament agenda](#), outlined in May, to “lower the risk of nuclear annihilation, prevent conflict of all kinds, and reduce the suffering that the proliferation and use of arms causes to civilians,” saying that it illustrates how nuclear weapons undermine global, national and human security.

“The total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the highest disarmament priority of the United Nations,” stressed the UN chief, noting that nuclear-weapon States have a lead role.

He called on all countries to commit to nuclear disarmament and to let “Nagasaki and Hiroshima remind us to put peace first every day; to work on conflict prevention and resolution, reconciliation and dialogue, and to tackle the roots of conflict and violence”.

“Let us all commit to making Nagasaki the last place on Earth to suffer nuclear devastation. I will work with you to that end,” he concluded.

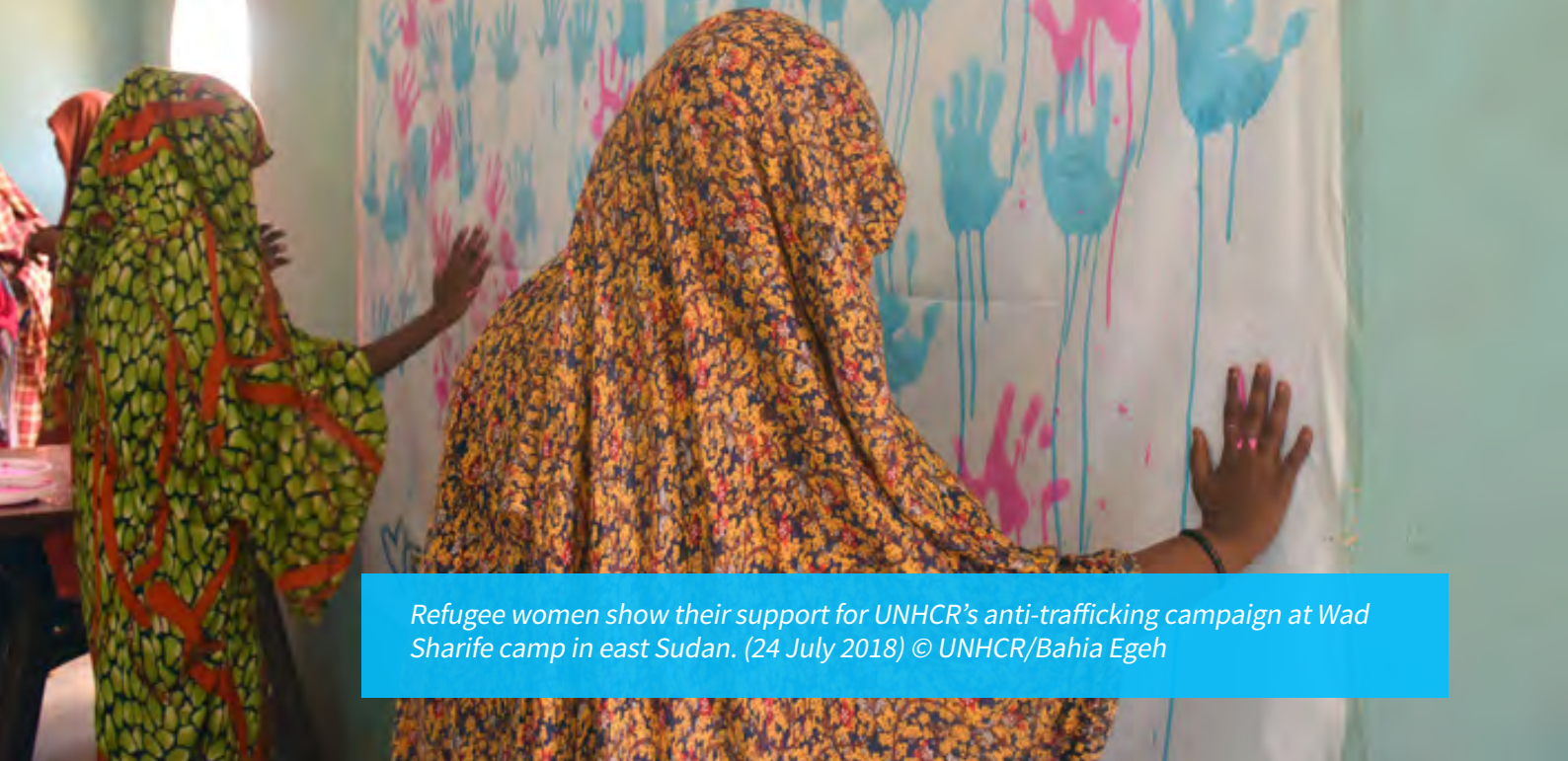
IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

“More than \$1.7 trillion was spent in 2017 on arms and armies,” says the UN Secretary-General. Shocking. Think of how that amount could have been better utilised to meet the UNSDGs and make the world a better place. And think of how that could have benefitted Travel & Tourism.



SDG 16:

**Conflict, climate
change increase
'desperation that
enables human
trafficking to
flourish'**



Refugee women show their support for UNHCR's anti-trafficking campaign at Wad Sharife camp in east Sudan. (24 July 2018) © UNHCR/Bahia Egeh



SDG 16: Conflict, climate change increase 'desperation that enables human trafficking to flourish'

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 30 July 2019
- To mark the [World Day Against Trafficking in Persons](#), United Nations [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) has stressed that “human trafficking is a heinous crime that affects every region of the world” – especially women and children.

According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime ([UNODC](#)), some 72 per cent of detected victims are women and girls, and the percentage of child victims has more than doubled from 2004 to 2016.

“Most detected victims are trafficked for sexual exploitation; victims are also trafficked for forced labour, recruitment as child soldiers and other forms of exploitation and abuse”, Mr. Guterres said in his [message](#) on the Day, marked annually on 30 July.

Many of those falling prey to traffickers are migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers who have left their country of origin for various reasons.

Pointing to armed conflict, displacement, climate change, natural disasters and poverty as factors that “exacerbate the vulnerabilities and desperation that enable trafficking to flourish”,

the UN chief emphasized that “migrants are being targeted”.

“Thousands of people have died at sea, in deserts and in detention centres, at the hands of traffickers and migrant smugglers plying their monstrous, merciless trades”, he continued.

Mr. Guterres also spotlighted the “everyday indifference to abuse and exploitation around us”, mentioning that “from construction to food production to consumer goods, countless businesses and enterprises benefit from the misery”.

Speaking on the need to step up protection for the most vulnerable, Mr. Guterres added that most countries have the necessary laws in place, but “more needs to be done to bring transnational trafficking networks to justice and, most of all, to ensure that victims are identified and can access the protection and services they need”.

“On this World Day against Trafficking in Persons, let us reaffirm our commitment to stop criminals from ruthlessly exploiting people for profit and to help victims rebuild their lives”, concluded the Secretary-General.

Profound change needed for social inclusion of survivors of trafficking

Echoing the Secretary-General's call to allow victims to access to protection and justice, the UN human rights expert on the issue urged States to step-up efforts towards and investment in long-term solutions to ensure compensation for people who are trafficked.

"Profound changes are needed in States' approaches to migration and trafficking", said Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, in a [statement](#) marking the Day, stressing that "restrictive and xenophobic migration policies and the criminalisation of migrants, as well as of NGOs and individuals providing humanitarian aid, are incompatible with effective action against human trafficking".

Presenting social inclusion as the "only and right answer" to exploitation and trafficking, Ms. Giammarinaro argued that "politicians fuelling hatred, building walls, condoning the detention of children and preventing vulnerable migrants from entering their territories are working against the interests of their own countries".

Highlighting that what is needed is "safe, orderly and regular migration", Ms. Giammarinaro asserted that making provision for the social integration of migrants is "crucial also for victims of trafficking, including women suffering discrimination, gender-based violence and exploitation, and children subjected to abuse during their journey, especially when travelling alone".

Solidarity and friendly social environment needed during recovery process

The Special Rapporteur added that survivors of trafficking need "solidarity and a friendly social environment to regain control of their lives", flagging the need for financial resources during that process.

"Access to remedies is not limited to compensation", she continued, "but it also

encompasses restitution, which implies the reuniting of families and the restoration of employment for victims, as well as guarantees of non-repetition".

Ms. Giammarinaro urged all States to "remove obstacles hampering access to justice for victims by giving residency status to people who have been trafficked, and by ensuring they are not detained or prosecuted for illegal activities they may have been involved in as a result of being trafficked".

The UN expert added that the empowerment process for survivors of trafficking should include education and training, "opening new paths to help them acquire new skills and equipping them for job opportunities".

"I believe that effectively including survivors in society and valuing their potential, skills and expertise can give them an opportunity to rebuild and change their lives, prevent re-trafficking and actively contribute to the dismantling of criminal networks", she concluded.

UN Special Rapporteurs serve in their individual capacity, independent from any government of organization.

Focus on protecting migrants

Also marking the day, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) issued a statement from the [United Nations Network on Migration](#) calling on the international community to accelerate its efforts to stop human trafficking and to protect those who fall victim to traffickers.

Reiterating that migrants are particularly vulnerable, the [statement](#) stressed that "countries need to urgently adopt holistic, human rights-based approaches to counter-trafficking which place migrants and their protection at the centre".

Globally, countries are identifying and reporting more victims and convicting more traffickers, according to the latest [UN Global Report on Trafficking in Persons](#). Despite some progress, however, "victims continue to face significant obstacles in accessing assistance, protection, redress and justice", the statement added.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Travel and Tourism relies on migrants all over the world. Like water, migration finds its own level, usually heading for the spot where labour is required, usually at the lowest possible cost. Someone always finds a way to match supply with demand. Illegal migration and human trafficking becomes the norm when countries have restrictive regulations for legal migration. Many Travel and Tourism companies realise the need to fix this problem, but it is a long way from being discussed at travel and tourism industry events.



SDG 16:

**All States
have 'primary
responsibility' to
protect against hate
attacks**



A group of people advocate against hate and discrimination based on ethnicity and religion in the Central African Republic. (2017) OCHA/Yaye Nabo Sène



SDG 16: All States have ‘primary responsibility’ to protect against hate attacks

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“From the other side of the apocalypse, the hibakusha have raised their voices on behalf of the entire human family. We must listen,” he asserted. “There can be no more Hiroshimas, no more Nagasakis, and so no more hibakusha.”

Mr. Guterres noted that 73 years on, fear of nuclear war still prevails, as States are spending vast sums to modernize their nuclear weapon arsenals.

“More than \$1.7 trillion was spent in 2017 on arms and armies — the highest level since the end of the cold war and around 80 times the amount needed for global humanitarian aid,” the Secretary-General pointed out.

Disarmament lag

Meanwhile, disarmament processes have slowed and even come to a halt.

“Many States demonstrated their frustration by adopting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons last year,” said Mr. Guterres.

Other deadly weapons also threaten incessant peril, such as chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, and those developed for cyberwarfare.

Moreover, conflicts fought with conventional weapons are lasting longer and are becoming more deadly for civilians, he added.

“There is an urgent need for disarmament of all kinds, but especially nuclear disarmament,” the UN chief maintained, citing this as the backdrop of his global disarmament initiative launched in May.

Mr. Guterres labelled disarmament “a driving force for maintaining international peace and security”, calling it a tool for ensuring national security.

“It helps to uphold the principles of humanity, promote sustainable development and protect civilians,” he spelled out.

He turned to his [disarmament agenda](#), outlined in May, to “lower the risk of nuclear annihilation, prevent conflict of all kinds, and reduce the suffering that the proliferation and use of arms causes to civilians,” saying that it illustrates how nuclear weapons undermine global, national and human security.

“The total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the highest disarmament priority of the United Nations,” stressed the UN chief, noting that nuclear-weapon States have a lead role.

He called on all countries to commit to nuclear disarmament and to let “Nagasaki and Hiroshima remind us to put peace first every day; to work on conflict prevention and resolution, reconciliation and dialogue, and to tackle the roots of conflict and violence”.

“Let us all commit to making Nagasaki the last place on Earth to suffer nuclear devastation. I will work with you to that end,” he concluded.

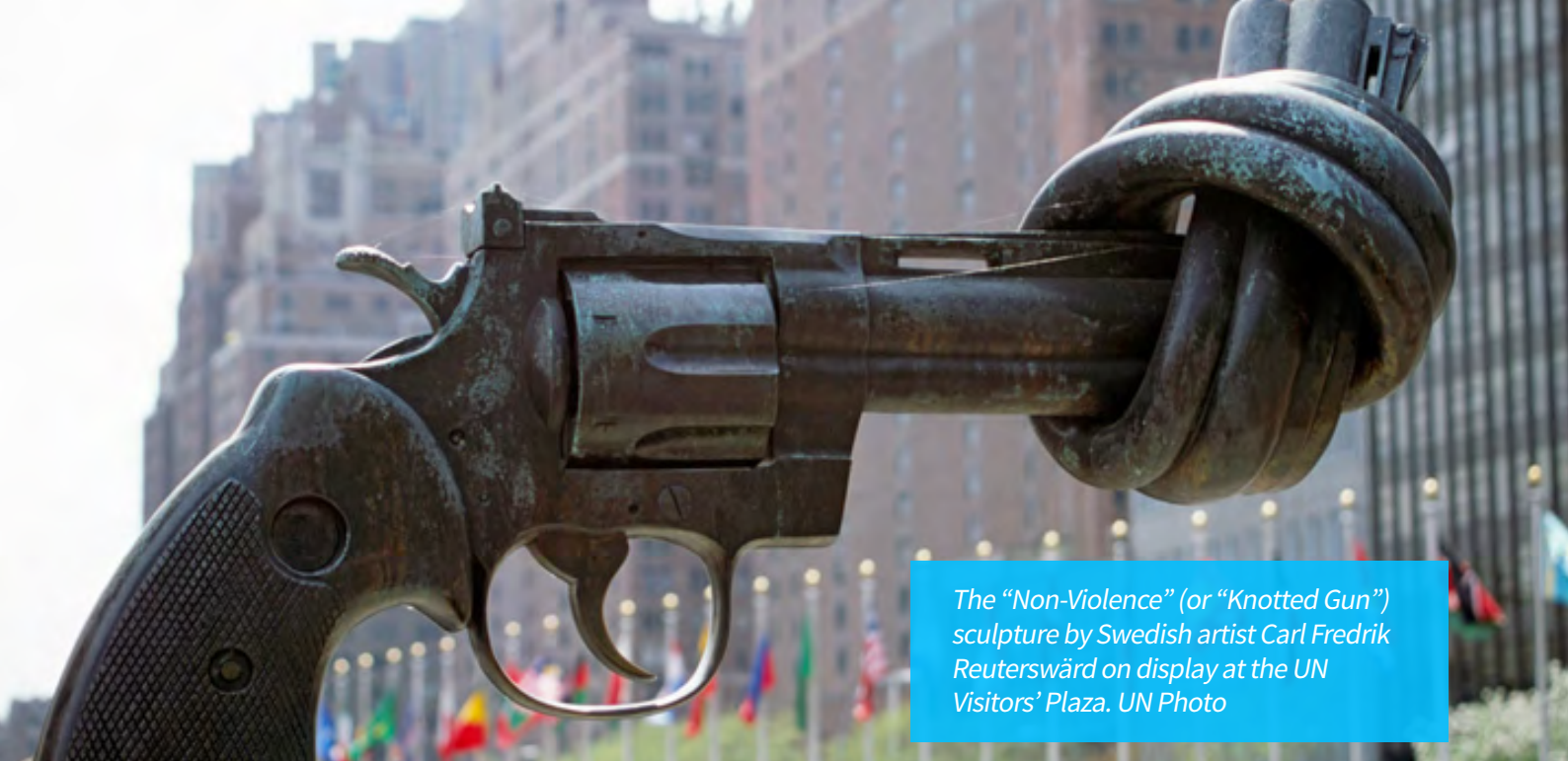
IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Hark these words: “Racism, xenophobia and intolerance – including white supremacy.” All deadly for peaceful existence of societies. Travel & Tourism has long claimed to be an antidote. It has obviously failed. Yet, no-one ever thinks about asking why.



SDG 16:

**Bigotry makes
politicians 'complicit
in the violence that
follows'**



The “Non-Violence” (or “Knotted Gun”) sculpture by Swedish artist Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd on display at the UN Visitors’ Plaza. UN Photo



SDG 16: Bigotry makes politicians ‘complicit in the violence that follows’

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 7 August 2019
Responding to the mass shootings in Texas and Ohio on Saturday, a group of independent UN experts has called out the “increased use of divisive language”, as well as attempts to marginalise racial, ethnic and religious minorities”, by some politicians and leaders.

In a statement released on Wednesday, the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent stated that they “encourage the United States to address such violence without delay as a matter of white supremacy and racism”, adding that the refusal to take “immediate and direct action” to prevent further acts of domestic terrorism, exacerbates complicity in the violence.

In the joint statement, E. Tendayi Achiume, independent expert, or Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, also condemned the use of hate speech in political discourse, declaring that “intolerance, bigotry and racism by politicians and leaders to secure or maintain popular support renders those individuals complicit in the violence that follows.”

‘Well-established connections’ between mass shootings and white extremism

“The United States must recognise the direct impact that racism, xenophobia and intolerance have in promoting violence and in creating fear and instability in ethnic and religious minority communities”, Ahmed Reid, chairperson of the Working Group of Experts said on Wednesday, in response to the massacres in Dayton, Ohio, and the US-Mexican border city of El Paso. “Perpetuating racism perpetuates violence.”

The Group questioned the theory, voiced by several leading US politicians this week, that the proliferation of mass shootings can be explained by mental illness, citing a recent statement from the American Psychological Association, and encouraged the US to “address such violence without delay as a matter of white supremacy and racism”, arguing that the “connections between mass shootings and white extremist ideology are well-established”.

According to the experts, such atrocities are commonly celebrated on white nationalist

media platforms, and ideas promoted by white nationalist and populist movements, have inspired the attackers in several mass shootings, as reflected in their manifestos and social media posts.

The Special Rapporteur, and the members of the Working Group, offered their condolences to the families, friends and loved ones of those murdered in the shootings.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Travel & Tourism has long claimed to be a culturally diverse industry which promotes traditions and heritage as one of its bedrock selling propositions. While tourism ministers always try to highlight their countries' socio-cultural diversity as an asset, many countries are facing internal conflict because of deliberate political fomenting of ethnic and religious tensions. Perhaps most shocking is that these politicians are supported by people in Travel & Tourism. Another living-in-denial issue that never figures on industry agendas.



SDG 16:

**Record number of
children killed and
maimed in conflict**



Former child soldiers are released in Yambio in South Sudan in February 2018. UNMISS/Isaac Billy



SDG 16: Record number of children killed and maimed in conflict

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 30 July 2019 - A new UN report has found that 2018 was the worst year on record for children caught up in armed conflict; the year saw the highest numbers killed or maimed since the United Nations began monitoring the violation.

In the 20 conflict situations monitored in the 2018 edition of the [Annual Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict](#), released Tuesday, more than 12,000 children were killed or maimed that year.

A ‘disheartened’ [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) said that he was “particularly appalled” by the unprecedented numbers of grave violations committed against children.

Children continue to be used in combat, particularly in Somalia, Nigeria and Syria: some 7,000 have been drawn into frontline fighting roles around the world, during 2018. They also continue to be abducted, to be used in hostilities or for sexual violence: more than half of the 2,500 reported cases were in Somalia.

Some 933 cases of sexual violence against boys and girls were reported, but this is believed to be an under-estimate, due to lack of access, stigma and fear of reprisals.

Attacks on schools and hospitals have decreased overall, but have intensified in some conflict situations, such as Afghanistan and Syria, which has seen the highest number of such attacks since the beginning of the conflict in the country.

Mali provides the most serious example of children being deprived of access to education, and the military use of schools: 827 schools in Mali closed at the end of December 2018, denying some 244,00 children access to education.

“It is immensely sad that children continue to be disproportionately affected by armed conflict, and it is horrific to see them killed and maimed as a result of hostilities”, said the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba. “Parties to conflict must protect

children and put in place tangible measures to end and prevent these violations”.

Detention and release of children involved in conflict

Rather than being seen as victims of recruitment, thousands of children around the world were detained for their actual or alleged association with armed groups in 2018: in Syria and Iraq, the majority of children deprived of their liberty are under the age of five.

The report calls on nations to work with the UN to help relocate foreign children and women actually or allegedly affiliated with extremist groups, with the best interests of the child as the primary consideration.

The number of children benefiting from release and reintegration support, however, rose in 2018 to 13,600 (up from 12,000 in 2017). The report recommends increased resources and funding to meet the growing needs, as more children are separated from armed groups.

Three Action Plans to end and prevent violations, and protect children, have been signed, following engagement with parties to conflicts in 2018. The countries involved were the Central African Republic, where two armed groups signed up to Action Plans; and Syria, where the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) agreed to a deal.

Progress on increased child protection, and ending child recruitment, has also been made in Yemen and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In his statement, the Secretary-General reminded all parties to conflict of their responsibility to protect children, adding that they must “refrain from directing attacks against civilians, including children”, and reiterating that “peace remains the best protection for children affected by armed conflict”.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

There is probably no more heartbreaking sight than that of a suffering infant or child. Yet, such imagery has become common these days, and people just don't seem to care. Most conflicts are going unreported in the global media, and affecting many Travel & Tourism destinations in the process. As Travel & Tourism claims to be an industry of peace, this is one area in which it certainly needs to demand more accountability from decision-makers. Perhaps having some eminent speakers from UNICEF or NGOs such as Child Rights can motivate us to do the right thing.



SDG 16:

**World must stamp
out persecution of
religious groups**



The UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, lays a wreath in Christchurch memory of the victims of a mass shooting in the New Zealand city in March 2019. (May 2019) UN Photo/Mark Garten



SDG 16: World must stamp out persecution of religious groups

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 22 August 2019 - UN chief António Guterres [called](#) for an end to the persecution of religious groups on Thursday, the first ever International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion and Belief.

The Day was created in response to an increasing number of attacks against individuals and groups, targeted simply because of their religion or belief, around the world. Examples, said the Secretary-General, include “Jews have been murdered in synagogues, their gravestones defaced with swastikas; Muslims gunned down in mosques, their religious sites vandalized; Christians killed at prayer, their churches torched.”

Mr. Guterres declared that the Day was an opportunity to reaffirm support for the victims of violence based on religion and belief, adding that “we demonstrate that support by doing all in our power to prevent such attacks and demanding that those responsible are held accountable”.

Pointing out that all major world religions espouse tolerance and peaceful coexistence, the UN chief urged resistance to, and rejection of, those who “falsely and maliciously invoke religion to build misconceptions, fuel division and spread fear and hatred”, noting that there is richness and strength

in diversity, which is never a threat.

The Secretary-General drew attention to two new initiatives set up to overcome the threat of violence based on religion and belief: a UN strategy and [Plan of Action on Hate Speech](#), and a Plan of Action to safeguard religious sites.

The latter initiative is being overseen by [Miguel Angel Moratinos](#), who delivered a draft plan to the UN chief at the end of July, following consultations with governments, religious leaders, faith-based organizations and other relevant stakeholders.

[Speaking](#) at a July conference on counter-terrorism in Kenya, Mr. Moratinos, who is the UN High Representative for the UN Alliance of Civilizations ([UNAOC](#)), said that the aim of the Plan is to provide “concrete and action-oriented recommendations that can help ensure that religious sites are safe and that worshipers can observe their rituals in peace.”

In a message released on the Day, Mr. Guterres said that the best way to overcome the threat of violence based on religion and belief is by “uniting our voices for good, countering messages of hate with messages of peace, embracing diversity and protecting human rights”.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Religious diversity has always been seen as an asset by national tourism destinations promoting their countries. Clearly, that is under threat. However, it is also the source of much shame the Travel & Tourism industry leaders remain silent in the face of extremist onslaughts, even though they fly in the face of some of the most fundamental principles of Travel & Tourism at large. The political dynamics of this mysterious silence certainly need to be explored, especially as it only worsens the problem. Eventually it will land up affecting the destinations. They will have no one but themselves to blame for the tourism downturn that will result when conflict erupts. Sweeping problems under the carpet is always an easy option, but eventually backfires.

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



SDG 17:

**Amidst new
challenges, Geneva
Conventions mark
70 years of 'limiting
brutality' during war**



Seventeen UN Member States met in November 1947 to sign protocols to amend the Geneva Conventions of 1921, 1923, and 1933. UN Photo

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



SDG 17: Amidst new challenges, Geneva Conventions mark 70 years of ‘limiting brutality’ during war

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 13 August 2019 - In commemorating the 70th anniversary of the landmark Geneva Conventions, the president of the United Nations Security Council hailed the “significant body of law”, describing it as playing “a vital role in limiting brutality of armed conflicts”.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the treaty, comprised of four Conventions and three Additional Protocols, established the modern, international legal standards for humanitarian treatment during times of war. They were agreed on 12 August 1949, and with some exceptions, ratified by 196 countries around the world.

“As they are ratified and acceded by almost every State of the world, the principles and legal norms enshrined in these Conventions are also recognized as customary international humanitarian law [IHL] and are universally applicable”, said Poland’s Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz, speaking for his nation which holds the Presidency of the Council for August. “This is a rare quality for any multilateral treaty”.

Among other things, the Conventions established protections for vulnerable groups in armed conflict, namely the wounded and sick; prisoners of war; and civilians, including civilians living under occupation.

Because Poland has been “painfully affected by consequences of other States’ failures to comply with international agreements” and in conjunction with its “sense of responsibility” to maintain international peace and security, Mr. Czaputowicz said that strengthening international law has always been important to his country.

“The greatest challenge to protecting human life in modern conflict is observance of and respect for the existing rules by the armed forces and non-State armed groups”, he asserted. “If existing rules were followed, much of the human suffering in contemporary armed conflicts would not occur”.

Poland's top diplomat also pointed to new threats that demand practices and policy consistent with international humanitarian law.

"Artificial intelligence and autonomous weapon systems, such as military robots and cyber-weapons, reduce the role and control of human factors during wartime", he continued. Moreover, the general rules of IHL prohibiting indiscriminate and inhumane weapons, "are being violated".

Two IHL principles under the Geneva Conventions that deserve particular attention, according to Mr. Czaputowicz, are "the obligation to protect civilians, prisoners of war, the wounded and shipwrecked" as well as "limitations to the rights of parties to an armed conflict on how they conduct operations and on their choice of weapons".

The increasing role of non-State actors and IHL legal loopholes are "the new reality of modern conflict", he spelled out, bemoaning that they hinder international humanitarian law "in many ways".

"International humanitarian principles are under pressure" and "the complexity of new challenges impedes the process of classification of conflict situations and makes it difficult to determine the exact rules that may be applied", he elaborated.

'Historic moment for humanity'

According to UN Legal Counsel Miguel de Serpa Soares, the four Conventions are "at the core" of IHL.

Noting that the first three conventions "were by no means completely novel at the time", he singled out the Fourth Convention as being "the first treaty that was specifically dedicated to the protection of civilian persons in time of war".

Mr. Soares also drew attention to Article 3, the provision on basic rules governing the humane treatment of people not involved in hostilities, including soldiers who have laid down their arms, those wounded or in detention, as well as civilians.

Calling the inclusion of Article 3 "a historic moment for humanity", he said it was the first instance in which non-international armed conflicts were regulated by a multilateral treaty. The significance is augmented by the fact that the Geneva Conventions are now universally adhered to.

Conventions show 'what is possible'

For his part, Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), maintained that the Geneva Conventions represent "one of the greatest achievements of inter-State cooperation" and "symbolize our enduring and common humanity".

"The Conventions show us what is possible when States take collective and individual action to uphold the law and humanitarian principles", he said.

Noting that "every single day" international humanitarian law is at work saving lives and protecting women, men and children in conflicts, he highlighted that while "we rightly hear about the violations because the consequences are tragic and visible", we must also "recognize the protective power and positive impacts when IHL is respected".

The ICRC chief painted a picture of IHL in action, when the wounded and sick are evacuated to safety; the detained are treated with dignity; the fate of missing people is clarified; and humanitarian assistance is delivered across lines.

"The impacts of IHL are also shown through acts of restraint, when horrors are not inflicted – civilian areas are spared from direct shelling, medical workers are able to freely operate without threat or targeting", he added.

Continued violations do not mean the law is inadequate, but rather that efforts to ensure respect are inadequate, he flagged, urging “we can – and must – do more”.

The world must not forget that “the Geneva Conventions represent a line of our common humanity, and they shield us from our own barbarity”, underscored Mr. Maurer.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM


Travel & Tourism is simply not doing enough to walk the talk of its self-proclaimed mantra of being an “Industry of Peace.” This continued head-in-the-sand blind-spot is one of its biggest shortcomings. Sticking to politically-correct agendas will eventually backfire on the industry as a whole. Don’t say I didn’t warn you.

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



SDG 17:

**Environmental
protection moves
'closer to the people'
through new human
rights agreement**



A wide range of human rights activists have been targeted in Colombia, especially those living in rural areas. Human and environmental rights campaigners are one focus of a new UNEP/OHCHR agreement signed 16 August, 2019. UN Colombia



SDG 17: Environmental protection moves ‘closer to the people’ through new human rights agreement

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 16 August 2019
- The UN environment agency and human rights office (OHCHR) signed a landmark new agreement on Friday aimed at better protecting vulnerable human and environmental rights defenders and their families, while increasing protection for people and the places where they live, across the world.

The UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)) will strengthen cooperation with [OHCHR](#), as threats to individuals and communities defending their environmental and land rights intensify. Reports suggest that an average of more than three rights defenders were killed every week last year.

Although more than 150 countries have recognized the right to a health environment in their constitutions or legal frameworks, “significantly more work is needed” to inform policy makers, institutions and the public, [say the leaders](#), both women, of the two UN bodies.

“A healthy environment is vital to fulfilling our aspiration to ensure people everywhere live a life of dignity”, said UNEP Executive Director, Inger Andersen. “We must curb the emerging trend of intimidation and criminalisation of land and environmental defenders, and the use of anti-protest and anti-terrorism laws to criminalise the

exercise of rights that should be constitutionally protected.”

“UNEP and the UN Human Rights Office are committed to bringing environmental protection closer to the people by assisting state and non-state actors to promote, protect and respect environmental and human rights. In doing so, we will move towards a more sustainable and just planet,” she added.

Human, environmental rights, need ‘stronger global partnerships’

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, said: “Our planet is being recklessly destroyed, and we urgently need stronger global partnerships to take action to save it...We call on leaders and governments to recognise that climate change and environmental degradation severely undermine the human rights of their people, particularly those in vulnerable situations – including the generations of tomorrow.”

A key part of the new protection agreement is to monitor threats to environmental human rights defenders more closely, develop better defenders’ networks, urge more effective accountability for perpetrators of violence and intimidation, and

promote “meaningful and informed participation by defenders and civil society, in environmental decision-making.

Ms. Bachelet said every State needed to be encouraged “to develop and enforce national legal frameworks which uphold the clear linkages

between a healthy environment and the ability to enjoy all other human rights, including the rights to health, water, food – and even the right to life... We also strongly encourage greater recognition that the actions and advocacy of environmental human rights defenders are deeply beneficial to all societies.”

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

This is another area where the Travel & Tourism industry leaders appear to be deafeningly silent. On the one hand, they claim to be great protectors and preservers of the environment. On the other, they do nothing to help those who are putting themselves and their lives online to preserve the environment. Giving awards for sustainability and environmental protection is one thing, speaking up for these men and women of courage who are at the front lines of the battle is quite another. Another clear example of an industry that loves to talk but steers clear of anything that is potentially risky and threatening.

